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## RED RUSSIA





# RED RUSSIA

*by*

THEODOR SEIBERT

TRANSLATED FROM THE THIRD EDITION

*by*

EDEN AND CEDAR PAUL

LONDON  
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*The German original, entitled "Das rote Russland, Staat, Geist und Alltag der Bolschewiki," was published by Knorr and Hirth of Munich, first and second editions 1931, third edition (eleven to fifteen thousand) 1932*

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## PREFACE TO THE THIRD EDITION

IN response to a widely expressed wish, a brief description of the armed forces of the Soviet Union was added to the second edition. The demand for a third edition, six months after the publication of the first, shows that the book has awakened a friendly interest altogether beyond expectation. I have taken the opportunity of revising the whole in accordance with the actual trends of Soviet economic life. Nevertheless, no drastic modifications were called for, either by criticisms of *Red Russia* or by the course of affairs in the U.S.S.R.

THEODOR SEIBERT

HAMBURG

November 1931



## PREFACE TO THE FIRST EDITION

EARLY in 1925 the author was sent to Soviet Russia by the "Hamburger Fremdenblatt", the "Münchener Neueste Nachrichten", and the "Leipziger Neueste Nachrichten" to ascertain whether, under the prevailing conditions of censorship, it had once more become possible for these newspapers to be permanently represented in Moscow. On his return to Germany in November 1925, the author believed himself able to answer this question in the affirmative. True, telegrams were censored before despatch, but articles sent through the post could pass freely; and in respect alike of the censorship of telegrams and of the criticism of ordinary newspaper articles after publication, the spirit of the authorities was liberal enough to allow journalists the requisite measure of freedom. At that time the bolsheviks were ready to tolerate a considerable amount of what they termed "negative reports", merely insisting upon decency of tone. The upshot was that the author was definitely commissioned as Russian newspaper correspondent of the above-named journals and went to Moscow under these auspices in the beginning of 1926. When he returned to Germany in 1929 it was on his own initiative, and not because of bolshevik pressure.

During these four years in Soviet Russia, the author's experience of the country was not confined to Moscow and Leningrad. Extensive journeys, by rail, boat, motor, and carriage, made him acquainted with almost all parts of the vast realm, his travels ranging as far as Turkestan and Eastern Siberia. Generally speaking, foreigners in Russia are dry-nursed, supervised, and bear-led—but these precautions cease to be effective in the case of one who lives a long time in Russia, has a good knowledge of the language, runs a household of his own, and travels whithersoever he pleases. Moreover, the bolsheviks have a different attitude towards such residents, knowing full well that the fancy-pictures and petty

deceptions which impress casual visitors will not go down with persons of wider experience. Besides, in due time the foreigner comes to understand all the artifices of Soviet phraseology, to recognise the significance of tones of voice and of play of features.

Writers and politicians who visit Soviet Russia can seldom withstand the temptation of committing their impressions to print. The western world's picture of the country has been seriously falsified by the books of writers (well-intentioned, as a rule) who have given an account, sometimes favourable and sometimes unfavourable, after a few weeks' or few months' stay. Persons not of Russian birth who have dwelt in contemporary Russia for several years with the sole purpose of studying Russian life and institutions, can be numbered on the fingers. Of these few, leaving non-Russian communists out of the reckoning, not one has hitherto published a comprehensive work on Soviet Russia.

That is why I have written this book. I began it in 1927, but as now presented to the reader it is fully up to date. I have been concerned, however, to describe in the main, not the fugitive, but the typical and permanent manifestations of bolshevism.

THEODOR SEIBERT

HAMBURG  
*February 1931*

## PREFACE TO THE ENGLISH TRANSLATION

DURING the four months that have elapsed since November 1931, there have been no noteworthy changes in the principles of bolshevik administration, economics, or social life. Strangely enough, in every one of Stalin's infrequent public utterances the non-Russian world seeks and finds intimations of a change of policy; but in each instance persons with adequate discernment will realise that the dictator has invariably uttered the same catchwords before—with the same lack of success. The Soviet regime is far more conservative (bolshevistically conservative) than outsiders imagine when unacquainted with the laws of motion that operate in Red Russia.

Still, little change though there has been, it seems expedient to seize the opportunity given by the publication of this English rendering of my book to say a few words regarding the most recent happenings in the Muscovite State.

On January 22, 1932, the Soviet government published an outline of the second Five-Year Plan, which relates to the period extending from January 1, 1933, to December 31, 1937. A few days later, on February 1, 1932, the poesy of the new Plan was followed up by a no less typically bolshevik specimen of harsh realism. Retail prices of the necessities of life and industrial products were advanced by amounts ranging from 20 to 200 per cent. To give some of the details: the cost of white bread went up 20 per cent; that of rye bread (the staple food in Russia), 33 per cent; that of potatoes, 43 per cent; that of beef, 50 per cent; that of sugar, 65 per cent; that of sausages and pork, 100 per cent; and that of textiles, 200 per cent. House rents have likewise been recently increased. On the other hand the economic plan for the year 1932 envisages an increase in the wages of industrial workers amounting to no more than 11 per cent, the increase during 1931 having been 6·7 per cent.



The reader will please note that the foregoing figures are official. So are all the figures published in this book, unless otherwise stated. Yet I feel sure that during 1932 the Soviet government will continue to assure the German, British, and American workers that there is a steady improvement in the Russian workers' standard of life.

THEODOR SEIBERT

LONDON

*March 1932*

## ABBREVIATIONS FREQUENTLY USED IN THE TEXT

U.S.S.R.	Union of Socialist Soviet Republics
R.S.F.S.R.	<i>Russian Socialist Federal Soviet Republic</i> <sup>1</sup>
SOVIET	Workers', Soldiers', and Peasants' Council
C.E.C.	Central Executive Committee of the Soviets
C.C.	Central Committee of the Communist Party
C.P.	Communist Party
C.C.C.	Central Control Commission of the Party
E.C.C.I.	Executive Committee of the Communist International
W.P.I.	People's Commissariat of the Workers' and Peasants' Inspection
N.E.P. (or Nep)	New Economic Policy
OGPU	Secret Political Police (formerly known as, and sometimes still spoken of as, the Cheka)
SPETS	Specialist or Technical Expert

<sup>1</sup> The "Great Russian" Republic, which is the dominant partner in the U.S.S.R.



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*BOOK ONE*

DO WE KNOW RUSSIA?



## CHAPTER ONE

### THE FANCY PICTURE OF PRE-REVOLUTIONARY RUSSIA

#### I. HOLY RUSSIA

No one has hitherto thought of writing a book upon the Germans, the French, or the English which should describe only the "masses", should give an account only of the labourers of the countryside, the industrial operatives and small shopkeepers of the towns, the writer being guided by the assumption that these alone, the "masses", constitute the essence and represent the true visage of a nation. When we want a picture of contemporary France, we do not consider the black-smocked peasant of Champagne more important than the Parisian lawyer, and for us the silk-merchant of Lyons is quite as indispensable as the coalminer of the Pas de Calais. When we think of "America", there rise into our minds images, not only of the stone walls of Manhattan, the Ford works in Detroit, and the slaughterhouses of Chicago, but also of the farmsteads in the Middle West, the "fundamentalist" townships of Tennessee, the millionnaires' palaces of Miami, and the poverty-stricken Negro and Italian quarters in New York. No serious-minded foreigner would write a book on Germany which should contain nothing but descriptions of the grimy workers of the Ruhr, the weather-bronzed countryfolk of southern Bavaria, or the harried clerks of the Leipziger Strasse, to the exclusion of any word about Weimar, Heidelberg, and Danzig.

But for us of central and western Europe (which the Russians call "Europe" without qualification in contrast with their own land) Russia has never been an integrated concept. Of no other country in the world is our notion at once so primitive and so one-sided; and of no other country

in the world have false ideas been so successfully diffused. This has been true for centuries, but above all it has been true during the last fifty years.

Europe has never adequately made first-hand acquaintance with Russia, which has been little sought for its own sake by people from other lands, and has not been a stepping-stone on the journey to places much frequented. From year to year no more than a few thousand foreigners visited the realm of the tsars. These few traversed it en route elsewhere and there have not been enough travellers to give other nations a living idea of the Russian nature. Broadly speaking, the rest of the world (always inspired by a lively curiosity about this mysterious empire on the eastern confines of Europe) has had as its only sources of information the accounts the Russians have been willing to give of themselves. But Russians are secretive, are taciturn—not indeed in daily life among themselves, but towards foreigners. Though talkative and communicative by temperament, the Russian has an inward conviction that it would be impossible to make an alien appreciate the beauties of his country or understand the greatness of the Russian spirit. When the questionings of non-Russians grow urgent, the Russian's tongue is palsied by his overwhelming love for Russia and by his manifest contempt for foreign lands and peoples.

Russia's self-idolisation, which has nothing in common with the self-complacency of the Latin nations or with the inert self-satisfaction of the Anglo-Saxons, is deeply rooted in the religious sentiment. "Holy Russia" is what the foreigner cannot understand, for this would be a desecration. Consciously or unconsciously, the Russian regards the foreigner, the Nemetsky,<sup>1</sup> as on a level with the beasts that perish, as a man without a soul. The Russian plumes himself upon his

<sup>1</sup> The "German", but this is tantamount to "foreigner", Germans being the foreigners with whom the Russians come most in contact. Derivatively, the Nemetsky is the "dumb man"—for he cannot speak Russian.

"breadth of character". How can there be a sympathetic understanding between him and the European, who regards this alleged breadth of character as sloth, slovenliness, and lack of purpose? Among the Russians the biblical idea of the Chosen People has been revived, so that they look upon themselves as having a destiny apart; as meritorious, not merely through service, but thanks to a divine mission. This conviction has been transferred, after a fashion, into the bolshevik mentality. Zinovieff, for instance, has formulated the "divine right" of the Russian communists in very plain terms. I shall never forget the frank amazement with which one of these fanatics greeted my criticism of the scandalous injustice of the legal procedure employed in the Kindermann affair of the year 1925. "You foreigners", he said, "make fetishes of written paragraphs and formal laws. A great heart is needed to understand the rhythm of Soviet Russia!"

Nevertheless the self-appreciation of the Russians is something very different from an excess of nationalist vanity. Hardly any other people in the world is so prone to self-criticism, nay self-contempt, in respect of all matters which have no concern with this basic religious concept of the Russian national mission. The average Russian is ready enough to make mock of the institutions of his country and to depreciate the talents of his co-nationals with a zeal which is at times disconcerting to the foreign auditor. He extols and admires the "more civilised" institutions of Europe<sup>\*</sup>; and he does this, not merely in order to please the European to whom he may happen to be talking, but because he is genuinely aware of the weaknesses of the Russians and is

\* To avoid confusion let me remind the reader that in the present work I shall, in general, use the term "Europe", not in its strictly geographical sense to denote all that part of the Europasian continent and adjacent islands which lies west of the Urals and north of the Caucasus, but (as it is almost invariably used by Russians) to denote that part of "geographical Europe" which lies to the west of the Russian frontier.

honestly assured that the Germans, the British, the French, etc., are more efficient. Almost in the same breath, however, he will lapse into an extremity of spiritual pride, should the conversation happen to drift towards matters belonging to the sphere of the "soul". However much enthusiasm a Russian may show for western achievements, in the depths of his mind he is thinking: "Wonderful, no doubt! But it is upon these wonderful trifles, these things you overvalue as 'practical', that you waste your time and squander your sublime human energies."

## 2. RUSSIA AS DEPICTED BY RUSSIAN NOVELISTS

The Russian novelists of the nineteenth century built a bridge between this psychological background of their fellow-countrymen and our familiar world of Europe. It is by the masterpieces of Russian literature, and above all by the works of Tolstoy, that we have been made acquainted with the core of the Russian nature. All the same, it is the Russian romance-writers who have, in the main, falsified our conception of their country. They did not do so intentionally, since they were writing for Russian readers. If Europe had studied the whole literary production of this epoch, the picture of Russia formed in the West would have been less of a caricature. For, in addition to the books describing the decomposition of Russian life and dealing with its morbid manifestations (the writings of Tolstoy belong to this category, no less than those of Gogol, Turgenieff, and Dostoevsky), there flourished towards the close of the nineteenth century a literature having a marked political trend, but a literature which remained almost unknown to Europe. It speaks volumes that one of the greatest among Russian epic writers, Nikolai Leskoff (ob. 1895), should not have been discovered by Europe until after the world war. Until the bolshevik regime was established, the only literature imported into Europe from Russia was that relating to ordinary social life. For a decade and

more, from about 1900 onwards, we contemplated Russia almost exclusively through the spectacles of Dostoevsky and Tolstoy. This stupendous one-sidedness was not our fault. We took what Russia offered.

### 3. THE INTELLIGENTSIA

In Russia the intelligentsia, forming a caste apart, exercised a dictatorship in all matters appertaining to the sphere of the mind. This caste originated somewhere about the 'sixties of the nineteenth century, and only those who belonged to it counted for anything in cultured Russian circles. The intelligentsia comprised imaginative writers, statesmen, publishers, journalists, university professors, and a considerable proportion of the nobility; or, rather, consisted of these sections of the population before the revolution. Its fundamental trend was criticism of the prevailing system in Russian affairs. This intelligentsia, which, being partly of bourgeois and partly of aristocratic origin, supplied the bulk of those who ran the governmental machine, being amplified by the extremely numerous proletariat of educated persons who were dependents in the palaces of the nobles and in the houses of well-to-do bourgeois, and who were trained at the universities. With the possible exception of the United States, there was no country in the world where so many facilities existed as in Russia for a promising young member of the working class to win access to the sources of culture. The upper stratum of the Russian population used to take a genuine delight in searching out able members of the lower orders and in promoting their rise out of the class from which they sprang. I cannot share the widely prevalent opinion that this intellectual proletariat was (owing to its derivation from the oppressed and exhausted classes of the population) mainly responsible for the inefficiency and aimlessness of pre-revolutionary Russia. On the contrary, I believe, that these fundamental elements of the Russian population, having risen



into the upper stratum of intellectuals, were corrupted by their new associates, who were rotten to the core. But this controversial question is not relevant to our present purpose.

The Russian intelligentsia as a whole could do nothing effective on behalf of Russia because those who belonged to it had no positive aims whatever, their only bond of union being a universally prevalent tendency to negation. Dragged hither and thither, now by their inborn love for the ways of Old Russia, and now by their inclination towards the "westernism" of those who, since the days of Peter the Great, had looked to Europe for salvation, the various groups of this remarkable caste of intellectuals were a prey to every new catchword and to every foreign idea. Typical intellectuals were to be encountered, now among the patriotic ultras who were known as panslavists, now in the underground circles formed by the Marxian parties, and now in the clubs of the Russian anarchists who had fled from their native land. In the last analysis, anarchism was the most conspicuous characteristic of the whole caste, an anarchism which reigned supreme at the universities, in the offices of State, and even at the court of the tsar. The members of the Russian intelligentsia were the pioneers and the sustainers of the revolution. Their futility in relation to the demands of practical life became plain when power fell into their hands at the time of the collapse of tsarism. From March to November 1917, when, under the leadership of Lvoff, Milyukoff, and Kerensky, the Russian intelligentsia held sway, we witnessed a blatant demonstration of the confusion and purposelessness which for half a century had been typical of the intellectual life of Russia. It was an act of compensatory historical justice that the genuine revolutionists, the little troop of bolsheviks, should have wrested from the numberless intellectuals all that the latter had so ardently hoped to gain from the revolution. Lenin made a clean sweep of these chaotic manifestations of an age of transition.

## 4. PETERSBURG

Thus the picture of Russia formed by western Europe was largely the outcome of the fact that the literature which, in translation, formed the elements of this picture was an expression of the above-described peculiar caste of Russian intellectuals. But an additional factor contributed, though less markedly, to the formation of the picture, namely Petersburg. As I use the term in this connexion, I denote by it the ruling section of the Russian population, the upper strata of the officialdom, the tsarist court, and all those Russians whose custom it was to spend a considerable part of every year abroad. Dwellers in and pupils of Petersburg, the only Europeanised city of Russia, were entirely Europeanised persons, and, indeed, Europeanised in a predominantly French direction. Inasmuch as thousands upon thousands of them were to be encountered at every European spa and in all the great cities of the West, their traits became for us the traits of modern Russia. In actual fact, however, they had been assimilated by Europe to the fullest extent to which a Russian can be assimilated, and the process went so far that these wealthy and migratory Russians, many of whom contracted marriages with foreigners, having adopted the habits and the ways of life characteristic of western Europe, came, often enough, to look more like western Europeans than like genuine Russians. We Germans had therefore been led to believe—quite erroneously—that the whole upper stratum of the Russian people had become Frenchified, and that French was the most important secondary language of the Russians; whereas, in truth, for one Russian who understands and speaks French, there are three who understand and speak German.

A third factor in the falsification of our image of Russia was the German man of business or engineer who had lived for a few years or decades in Old Russia. I have personally known many such, and almost all of them were prone to

refer to their Russian experiences with the utmost enthusiasm, being inclined to describe Russia as the country of all countries in which a European could make himself comfortably at home. Critical inquiry, however, almost always disclosed that this enthusiasm was partly dependent upon the ease with which an efficient European could make money in Russia, and partly upon the cordial hospitality shown by the Russians. But these should not become decisive elements in the formation of our picture of a foreign nation.

### 5. THE FLASHLIGHT OF THE REVOLUTION

The Russia which revealed itself to the astonished eyes of Europe in the flashlight of the bolshevik revolution, has nothing in common with the picture which has become familiar. It suddenly grew plain that the Russian nation did not consist exclusively of pessimistic landowners, philosophically minded peasants, and anarchistic students. The Petersburg that had been covered with French polish was in a trice engulfed in the maelstrom of the revolution, and it became clear that the impulses and energies which were now clashing one against another in the stupendous conflict, could never have been created in the Garden of Eden depicted by foreign visitors to Russia. During one of the pulses of history, during the civil war which lasted from 1918 to 1922, the interventionist armies gave Europe a plain sight of the nude and parturient Russian body. Then, all too soon, the curtain was lowered between us and this land of mystery. Its new lords, the bolsheviks, closed the door more hermetically than ever before, and established a monopoly in the description of Russia. A transformation scene took place. The fancy picture painted by the Russian intelligentsia was replaced by a no less fanciful image of the stage on which the drama of the world revolution was being enacted. Russia was "setting an example in the inauguration of socialism".

## CHAPTER TWO

### THE COUNTRY AND ITS INHABITANTS

#### I. THE RUSSIAN PLAIN

DOES not the actual face of Goethe show itself, of a sudden, more distinctly to one who, for the first time, retraces the poet's footsteps in Weimar? Have we not acquired a better understanding of the creative work of the Renaissance since the able descriptions by Gobineau and Merezhkovsky have made us more closely acquainted with the environment in which Michelangelo and Leonardo lived and breathed? How false an impression we should form of a Chinese whom we met in a cultivated Berline circle were we unable forthwith, in imagination, to project his Europeanised visage against a Chinese landscape! Science has not done anything essentially new by introducing the latter-day methods of depicting the nations in their habitual environment or by reconstructing histories and cultures upon the basis of the land and the political circumstances from which they have sprung. All of us, unconsciously, have invariably done this, alike as concerned individuals and as concerned nations.

Townships, being late-born products of human community life, have little significance in this respect, for they are not nation-building elements of the landscape. During the early months of my stay in Russia I learnt little of the Russian nature—for I was living in Moscow. My first momentous experience in Russia was a voyage on the Volga; and my second, which followed closely on the first, was a motor drive from north to south across the whole of European Russia, from Leningrad to Tiflis. Europeans scarcely know what a plain is; there are no plains worthy of the name in our Europe. Plains there were of old, but they have ceased to exist. There are flat areas, of course, but they are criss-

crossed by roads and railways and by a close-meshed network of telegraph wires, with villages, towns, and factories at almost every step, each with an obvious purpose of its own. Thus the European plain has long since lost the characters proper to the name. In Russia, on the other hand, the white river-boat steams for weeks through an unchanging landscape: on the left, the flat banks bebrushed, uncultivated; on the right, a tilled declivity. This is what we see as we voyage down the Volga, the Dnieper, or the Oka. Travelling northward, of course, up the Volga, the Moskva, or the Kama, the picture is reversed, the hills being on our left and the flatland on our right—a flatland which is the marge of a huge plain that could swallow all our Europe almost without noticing it.<sup>1</sup> Now for the other picture. My drive from the north of Russia to the south took a fortnight, and I covered a stretch equal to that from Stockholm to Palermo. All the way, until we reached the foothills of the Caucasus, the motor hummed across unending flats or a gently rolling plain, very thinly afforested and very thinly peopled, splendidly deserted. No great powers of imagination are needed to picture to oneself how the mounted nomads of Asia stormed across the unending Russian plain, trampling the inhabitants beneath the hoofs of their horses. In this part of the world he who turns his gaze backwards is not impeded in his vision by any recent development, but can both see and feel the primal life of the countryside.

The titanic eastern steppes, which offer the puny human spirit no resting-place nor any hitching-posts for memory, have been essentially alien to the accretion of a "history". It was impossible for them to give their inhabitants the self-awareness that flows from the source of historical reminiscence. In these interminable and homogeneous spaces, no true sense

<sup>1</sup> It is a remarkable fact which still lacks an adequate scientific explanation, that almost all the Russian rivers, towards whatever point of the compass they flow, have a plain on their left bank and hills on their right bank.

of the State could arise. Only to modern man, equipped with modern means of communication, have the dimensions of this part of the world become conceptually apparent. For the Russian peasant, who still lives in the Middle Ages, his homeland seems limitless, coterminous in his mind with the world. For him, whatever lies beyond the Russian sphere can only be petty and godless. Obviously, to his thinking, the boundless Russian territory merges on all sides into God and is throughout fulfilled with God. The suprasensual is the only firm abiding-place for those who are lost, so to say, in such vast expanses. Not by chance is it that the settlements of Russia are bestrewn with churches. Amid the dull grey of the wooden huts of Russia, white and gold upon the monotonous tints of the plain (bi-dimensional throughout), rise heavenward these temples built with glad hands. For the Russian has interwoven into the style of his ecclesiastical architecture all the joy of which his nature is capable. His human craving for a life that shall transcend the purely animal, finds vent in the ritual of the Orthodox Church, which alike in ardour and in the intoxication of its colouring transcends even that of Rome.

What, indeed, considered pictorially, are the towns of Russia other than aggregates of closely packed churches? Even to-day many of these towns, which have at their centre a few buildings of brick or stone, produce the impression of huge villages at fair-time. Inquire in any Russian town and you will find that only a small percentage of the population consists of townsmen by birth. Just as the Russian town seems little more than a number of villages huddled together, so do we find that the Russian town-dweller has a thousand threads connecting him with the villages of the countryside. That is why there is no genuine urban proletariat in Russia. With very few exceptions, the Russian proletarian is by origin and mentality nothing other than a declassed peasant who, unexpectedly enfranchised from servitude to monastery or feudal lord, impelled by the urge of poverty in time of revolution,

has come, for a season, to make a living in the large economic mart of the city, and who now, in the winter of 1930-1931, is creeping back into the village in order to escape the stresses and the poverty to which bolshevik industrial policy has subjected him.

## 2. NOMADIC BLOOD

The Russian countryside stimulates nomadism. As contrasted with the man of the hill-country, the man of the plains has an impulsive desire to wander. It does not seem worth while to remain fixed in one spot laboriously cultivating a tiny area of land when roads leading elsewhere lie open in all directions, and when everywhere, as far as the eye can see and beyond, similar conditions prevail. Furthermore, the tyranny of the successive lords of the plain—the Tartars, the princes, the territorial magnates—has contributed to making the Russians unstable and aimless. An additional factor working in the same direction has been a profound belief in the fatherhood of God and in divine protection, the offspring of natural religion, and therefore based, not upon a moral but upon a mystical foundation. Since, however, the country did not lend itself to true nomadism but demanded cultivation, the Russian had to become a migratory worker, one whose pleasure it was to wander, whereas work was burdensome and a necessary evil. The average Russian, whenever he is able, earns (with closed eyes so to say, and as quickly as he can) a sufficiency of bread for a few days or weeks. Having done so, he devotes himself to consuming his gains during a period of complete inactivity, and does not resume work until the wolf is at the door. It is owing to this preposterous rhythm of labour that the efficiency of Russian production stands at so low a level. The statistics showing the workers' "days off" in industry speak volumes. European engineers and managers who have worked in Russian enterprises are all agreed in declaring that piece-work rates and the payment of premiums are rarely

successful in producing steady and unremitting labour. "Why should one work so hard? What's the use of earning much money? It's not worth while!" This phrase, "It's not worth while", or "It's not worth the trouble", is a key to the Russian national character. From the same source derives the general disorderliness of daily life in Russia, the indifference to the using-up of property, the disinclination to adopt any new methods that demand increased exertion—in a word, the fatalist trend of the Russians.

Idleness and vagabondage go hand in hand. It is difficult for us of the West to realise how fond the Russians are of roaming. If statistics could be tabulated showing the extent of these wanderings from village to village, from village to town and back again to village, from province to province, we should find the total crazy. To the monks and sectaries who for centuries have gone to and fro throughout the length and breadth of Russia, to the numberless peasants who, shouldering their few belongings, have continually been setting out in search of new farming land, there must be superadded in modern times the factory workers, miners, and so on, who are continually shifting from place to place and from job to job, partly in the hope of discovering better conditions, partly for no other reason than the wish to escape the boredom of a settled life. The Soviet government, which finds this migratory impulse of the workers a great nuisance, has published figures showing that the personnel of the factories is often completely changed in the course of a few months. Such fickleness of tenure is not confined to the manual workers, for the mental workers and the technicians are equally unstable. When I returned to Germany from Moscow, not one of my Russian acquaintances was working at the same job in the same place as when I arrived four years earlier. Even in the "good" times before 1929, most of the salaried employees changed their situation on the average once a year. In this matter we are mainly concerned with a national custom, as becomes plain to any one who quietly watches what goes on in the urban enter-



prises of Russia. The restlessness, the continual coming and going, the interminable chatter about trifles, the stress that is laid upon external forms at the very time when vitally important decisions are being evaded—these things combine to arouse the impression that the Russians engaged in such enterprises are not fulfilling obvious duties but are like amateur actors playing imperfectly studied and uncongenial roles. They resemble newly caged wild birds which will not recover their natural ways or pipe their characteristic songs until the door of the cage has been opened.

### 3. PASSIVE FRATERNITY

The inhabitants of the Russian plain have, in a sense, a collective being. The individual feels lost in these vast spaces ~~unless he is~~ a member of a herd, whereas forests and mountains generate the solitary and individualistic types, tend to produce hermits. In hardly any other nation do we find so much fraternal affection, so much inborn brotherliness as among the Russians. ~~Although in Russia the prince and the wage-earner are, in respect of social position, as widely separated as the poles, there is more human proximity between them than between a secretary and an upper secretary in Germany.~~ Titles were reserved for official use, whereas in everyday life even the serf addressed his lord by Christian name and patronymic. On the large estates, hundreds of persons lived together under patriarchal conditions. This fraternity, which existed even though the great landowner was at times very free in his use of the whip, became especially manifest in periods of general distress. Russian benevolence and humankindliness, which were in large measure incorporated in social legislation, were free from the unpleasant subflavour of "charity" prevalent in the West. When the Russian bestowed alms, it was not because his social conscience was uneasy (however good grounds there may have been, to our way of thinking, for such uneasiness),

but because he was inspired by a genuinely Christian love of his neighbour. Typical of this is the fact that the poor, as well as the rich, bestowed alms whenever occasion arose. When a foreigner hears talk of the terrible hardships from which the vestiges of the Russian bourgeoisie suffer, he is always inclined to ask: "But how on earth do these people manage to go on living?" I will answer this question by an example. A Russian woman of my acquaintance, earning the equivalent of £180 sterling, not only supported her unemployed husband and her mother, but sent frequent aid to two old women among her kin. With all this, she was still able to spare a little if one of her innumerable friends or acquaintances was in grave distress.

From very early times, the insecurity of everyday life in Russia has inclined the Russians to seek the leadership of persons stronger and stabler than themselves. "Our land is great and wealthy, but lacks order. Come hither to be our princes and to rule over us!" This oft-quoted invitation sent by the Russians to the Norsemen, the Varangians, is recorded by an eleventh-century chronicler. It was an expression of the folk mentality which throughout all the phases of Russian history has enabled bold adventurers to fight their way to popularity and power. Such figures as that of the pseudo Demetrius, of Stenka Razin and Pugachoff, or as that of Lenin and Ungern-Sternberg, seem hardly conceivable in any other nation than the Russian. But if Russians are readily intoxicated by a new idea, are easily attracted towards some alien centre of forces, their enthusiasms are dissipated with equal celerity. The community feeling of Russians has not hitherto been of the kind out of which a State edifice can be constructed. Russian fraternity is passive, showing its strength in resignation and suffering. But in such a capacity for patient endurance there is at one and the same time a great force and a dangerous weakness. It is this faculty, and this alone, which has enabled the Russians to live through the tragical epochs of their history. Nevertheless, Russian patience always

borders on nihilism, involving the risk that the national impetus will gradually die down and that the power of resisting toxic influences will be lost—despite the youthful vigour of the national body. Moreover, in the Russian spirit, there are associated with this pseudo-collective sense of fraternity certain disastrous trends, such as a fondness for conspiracy, a proneness to use the weapon of political assassination, an inclination towards mental and bodily self-mutilation. Misunderstandings are apt to arise if we try to discuss the problem of the Russian character in the political and philosophical terminology of the West. Even though the concepts nihilism, anarchism, fatalism, collectivism, have been to a considerable extent formulated as the outcome of a study of Russian instances, the words fail to do justice to the peculiarities of the Russian spirit, and confuse rather than enlighten.

#### 4. TSARISM

The tsarist State which, during the last five centuries, grew out of the Russian plain, was not so unnatural, was not so alien to the popular mentality, as the Russian intelligentsia endeavoured to make us believe. In its broad outlines it was accordant to the nature of the country. The dominion of the Romanoffs, welded as it was with the Orthodox Church, and embodying (as far as its most genuine representatives were concerned) a characteristically theocratic outlook, was sufficiently removed from the people to be free from the burden of responsibility for the harshness of the administrative system, without, however, being so remote as to be regarded as alien or un-Russian. When the slothful and corrupt official nobility tormented the common folk and sucked them dry, the animus of the Russian peasant was not directed towards the tsar. The sufferers said to themselves: "If only our Little Father in Petersburg knew how these bloodsuckers treat us, he would punish them finely!" The pioneers of the revolution, as we learn from their own testimony, found it extraordinarily

difficult to direct the current of indignation against the imperial house—and this notwithstanding the fact that during the last years of its existence the tsarist court had completely lost touch with the country.

It is still an open question whether a gentler hand at the helm of State would have enabled the Russian ship to advance more quickly. There has been no experience to show whether democratic forms of government would have been successful with this migratory folk of the Russian plains, inasmuch as, for a thousand years and more, Russia has been “ridden on the curb”, and the despotism of the bolsheviks followed hard upon the heels of the absolutism of the tsars. The six months’ interregnum of the year 1917, when the comedy of government by the intelligentsia was being played, certainly gives us very little reason to believe in the democratic capabilities of the country. We are only jumping to a conclusion if we account for the Russian revolution by the simple supposition that in modern Europe an unconcealed autocracy has become impossible. Forms of government per se are never felt alien to the spirit of the time, or at any rate are never swept away for that reason alone. In all the great epochs of history, the most diversified forms of government have existed side by side. To take the most modern instance, in the present “age of democracy” we find representative governments like those of the German republic and the British monarchy contemporaneous with and adjacent to the fascist personal autocracy, the Polish military dominion, and the bolshevik oligarchy. Let us leave it to the students of political science to amuse themselves by deciding which form of government is at a particular time best suited to a particular people. The actual fact is that the continuance of a regime depends mainly upon the spirit and the capacity of the members of a ruling group.

When Russia became ripe for revolution, it was not because the country did not possess a sovereign parliament, but because the last autocrats were weaklings, unable to fulfil their historical mission and lacking the skill to depute their power to efficient

underlings. The ship of the last Romanoffs (who were themselves devoid of statesmanlike instincts), under the guidance of helmsmen who were continually being changed, tacked to and fro for a century between the Scylla of reaction and the Charybdis of premature or unduly timid reform. Nicholas I (1825-1855), the founder of the modern Russian bureaucracy which was completely out of touch with the people, was succeeded by Alexander II (1855-1881), a less hide-bound autocrat than his father. But Alexander's most notable achievement, the abolition of serfdom, failed to bring the expected advantages, for the tsar had not the courage to be consistent, and in the evening of his days attempted by forcible means to lay the spirits which the reforms of his youth had conjured up. Alexander III (1881-1894), drawing false conclusions from the experiences of the previous reign, fancied that salvation for the State and the monarchy was to be found in fortifying the autocracy and in annulling, as far as could be, all Alexander II's reforms. Narrow-minded but firm of purpose, he actually succeeded for the time being in pacifying his country, harassed though it was by the bureaucracy and spurred on towards revolution by the intelligentsia—establishing tranquillity of the kind that heralds a storm.

## 5. NICHOLAS II

Nicholas II was a timid creature with no more wit than is needed by a petty shopkeeper to run a small business. Like Louis XVI, he had to pay for his father's faults. The life of this last of the tsars will be regarded by historians as one of the most tragical in the records of monarchy. From the day of his coronation, which was overshadowed by the trampling to death of about two thousand men, women, and children in the Khodinskoe Polye near Moscow, to the day of his death, when he and his family were shot at Ekaterinburg, he marched from disaster to disaster; taciturn, unstable,

devout, lulled in the sentimental atmosphere of a happy and quiverful family life. If ever a system were ripe for destruction, this was true of the Russian autocracy in the days when tsar and tsaritsa were living an ever more retired life in the bosom of their family with minds increasingly clouded by religious mysticism, what time the titanic empire they were supposed to rule was staggering from one reverse to another amid social and political convulsions. Appropriately enough, during this terminal phase, the influence of Rasputin, the Siberian monk and wonder-worker, was dominant at the Russian court.

Whenever the image of the last of the Romanoffs rises before my mind, it is set, as in a frame, in the huge palace whence, in the year 1917, Citizen Romanoff went forth to exile and death. Tsarskoe Selo, not far from Petersburg, a commonplace palace, was furnished in the barbarous taste of the 'nineties of the last century, crammed with souvenirs of all kinds, the walls beset and the tables covered with amateur photographs, while the imperial bedroom was decorated with ikons. Close at hand, one of the few large rooms in the palace, was the day-nursery, in which could be seen the wheel-chair of the ailing heir to the throne. In the tsar's study, beside Nicholas' own desk, was a small writing-desk for the young tsarevich, with a miniature outfit. From this habitation, fit dwelling for a fairly well-to-do member of the European middle class, Russia was ruled.

In truth during those years Russia ruled herself. There was no one of outstanding ability among the officialdom. Strong personalities like Witte and Stolypin had brief careers, for men of energy could not be tolerated. The tsar's vision was too restricted, and his hands were too weak, for him to cope with the particularist interests of the courtiers and politicians, for him to counteract the intrigues of the cliques that were formed among them. The upper stratum of the Russian people had broken up into numberless political and social groups whose aims ranged from unbridled enjoyment

to uncontrolled political power. Conspiracy against the extant—against what had become untenable—was the only “general line” of Russian intellectual life, whether (at the one extreme) among the panslavists, or (at the other) among the secret circles of the bolsheviks. Throughout the lower strata and at lower levels of culture, purely material oppositions were conspicuous: the provocative expenditure of the members of the landed aristocracy, who, since the liberation of the serfs, had lost all interest in politics; the pretentiousness of the newly rich mercantile class; the mushroom fortunes of the industrial magnates—these, on the one hand, and, on the other, the land hunger of the peasants, punctuated by periodical famines; and the demagoguery of the urban proletariats, now in course of formation and therefore having no root in tradition.

The empire of the tsars was ripe for destruction. If that destruction was so complete that no stone was left standing upon another, the explanation is to be found in the fact that the fall was long overdue. Profound as the cleavage between Europe and Russia has always been, it was left for the bolsheviks to establish a water-tight bulkhead between East and West. During the nineteenth century, European ideas continued to trickle into Russia, were absorbed there, were tinctured with Russian spices and distilled in a Russian apparatus. Thus, by degrees, the mind of the nation was leavened. Since the ruling house became more and more incapable of controlling the machinery of that autocracy which had originated in conformity with the character of the land, it was inevitable that sooner or later Russia should give ear to the whisperings of the westerners who, judging by European standards, declared that the tsarist regime had become an anachronism. In other words, the tsarist State had lost faith in itself, but lacked courage to draw the necessary political inferences. The longer this disastrous uncertainty lasted, the more violent was bound to be the collapse when at length it should come. In Russia the uncertainty, the in-

stability, lasted wellnigh a century. The Decabrist rising in the year 1825 was the first threatening of the storm which on March 12, 1917, ground the tsarist autocracy to powder. Less than seven months later, on November 7, 1917, the Leninist autocracy was established.



## CHAPTER THREE

### THE FANCY PICTURE OF CONTEMPORARY RUSSIA

#### I. THE PASSING VISITOR

How should Europe know contemporary Russia better than she knew the realm of the tsars? Whereas before the revolution a few thousand foreigners lived in or visited Russia, the number of these is now told in hundreds. In Old Russia the foreigner could travel whithersoever he willed, could visit any one he pleased, could study whatever interested him. Things are very different to-day. Before the war, year by year, tens of thousands of Russians visited the West. Even though they may have been disinclined to initiate us into their profoundest national mysteries, they talked freely enough, and were in general ready to answer our questions. Now the only Russians who cross the border are either political refugees with minds so envenomed by hatred that they have almost ceased to be able to speak clearly, or else bolshevik officials, some of whom make it their chief purpose to inspire enthusiasm for Soviet Russia, while the others seem afraid to utter a word about their native conditions. Thus our picture of contemporary Russia has as its main element the invectives of her bitterest enemies and the rosy accounts given by the whole-hearted admirers of the bolshevik regime. A balance between the two stories might perhaps furnish a sound image of the country—were it not that to the old enigmas of Russia there has now been superadded the enigma of a form of political life which has no equivalent in history. Apart from association with intimate friends, almost the only cheerful hours a foreigner in Moscow can now appreciate to the full are those spent in "joy-rides" with passing strangers. I can scarcely recall an instance in which a new-comer has failed to be profoundly impressed by his first sight of the Soviet capital. Surprise is

manifested in various ways, according as national temperament varies, now in the American woman's ejaculations of "wonderful!" and now in the dumb amazement of the taciturn Hanseats. Always there is surprise at the manifold activities of this great city, at the busy crowds in the streets, the multitudinous circulation of trams, autobuses, cars of all kinds, and droshkies, at the broad streets and great squares, and at the numberless churches.

Of course the foreign visitor notices the "grey" aspect of the populace with its invariable proletarian dress; and he does not fail to perceive the extremely bad condition of the house-fronts; but he had been led to expect something much worse than this—people with fear stamped on their faces; lorries full of soldiers wearing the uniform of the Red Army; self-important commissaries; gangs of prisoners; in a word, the Soviet Russia which Europe has pictured for itself on the ground of its own revolutionary experiences and on that of the stories told by Russian refugees. It seems almost incredible that so foolish a conception should persist, for the most elementary reflection will show that a whole nation cannot spend ten years in weeping and gnashing of teeth, and that mass arrests and mass executions cannot be continued for a decade. The visitor is, indeed, somewhat indignant if he be ironically asked: "Did you expect to see heaps of corpses in every street?" All the same, from time to time there will be some such remark as that of a gentleman from Berlin who, when taking a walk outside the Kremlin, heard machine-gun fire from within the fortress, and said: "Listen! no doubt they are executing political criminals!"

The writers of Cheka-novels and Cheka-films have, indeed, done excellent work in the way of propaganda on behalf of the Soviet State, first of all through their exaggerations, and secondly because they continued singing the same songs at a time when the bolshevik government had long since abandoned a manifest reign of terror in favour of less conspicuous methods for the maintenance of power. One who comes to visit Russia

with his head stuffed full of such legends will be apt (even if there be a substantial basis of truth in the stories he has been told) to say again and again: "After all, things are not nearly so black as they have been painted, and there has obviously been a great deal of falsehood and exaggeration." It is this sharp contrast between the fancy picture of Russia as painted in Europe, on the one hand, and the realities of Russian life, on the other, which convert so many of the casual visitors to Russia from Sauls into Pauls. No one can learn anything from a brief visit to the land of the bolsheviks. During the years I spent in Moscow I met very few visitors who were not influenced by the suggestions of this unexpected contrast—among the exceptions being an American woman journalist and a German party leader. I need hardly say that I exclude from consideration those who come to Russia with the fixed intent to see nothing but what is bad and to trumpet their unfavourable impressions far and wide as soon as they return to Europe.

## 2. HOW NOT TO LEARN ABOUT RUSSIA

No one can learn what Russia is really like at the Metropole Hotel or the Savoy Hotel in Moscow. These hotels, and three or four others in all Russia, though by no means elegant or even orderly and clean to European eyes, are nevertheless oases among Russian caravanserais. There you can get courteous service, and there vestiges of the tip system are still retained—this latter being a great comfort to the ordinary traveller from the West. You will find dining-rooms of the familiar type; above all, you will still feel at home, still feel that you are "in Europe". Almost all the guests are travellers from Europe, who will be slow to realise that the business of the attentive servants is not only to minister to the wants of the visitors! In the third of the hotels for foreigners in Moscow, the Grand Hotel, the dining-room has an almost luxurious aspect even for those whose eyes have grown accustomed to

Russian conditions, and in this dining-room persons who are not staying in the hotel can find entertainment. Furthermore, besides being the only place in Moscow where you find a good restaurant, the Grand Hotel is the headquarters of an artists' club, and is the only place in which public dancing is permitted.

I have never been able to understand why Red Russia has prohibited public dancing. The bolsheviks are neither pruders nor opposed to festivities in general; they promote sport in all its forms; and on the stage they encourage the display both of classical dances and folk dances. Their attitude towards ordinary social dancing seems, therefore, inexplicable. But the privilege accorded to the Grand Hotel is, in part, an expression of the general attitude of the bolsheviks towards foreign visitors. "We need the alien bourgeois," they say to themselves; "we must therefore offer him some of the things to which he is accustomed at home." The second reason may be that the foreigner who is allowed to amuse himself by dancing will be likely to open his purse widely, and will thus provide more of the foreign bills of exchange which are so urgently needed by Russia. Although for display purposes the principal meals in these hotels are cheap enough, in other respects the prices are enormous, by our European standards. Seldom can a room be hired for less than 12 roubles;<sup>1</sup> and the better rooms cost from 15 to 20 roubles a day. A bottle of red wine, which can be bought in a shop for from 3 to 4 roubles, will be charged from 15 to 20 roubles in your bill at the Grand Hotel. The manager does not hesitate to "stick on the prices". The music for the dances is provided by the only jazz band in this city with a population of two millions. Among the frequenters are ladies of a certain sort ready to minister to the needs of foreign bachelors and grass widowers. Such ladies are also to be found in plenty outside the doors and even on the steps of the three before-mentioned hotels.

<sup>1</sup> At the time of writing the rouble is equivalent to a little more than two shillings.

Every male visitor to Soviet Russia will confirm my statement that it is usual to be accosted within forty-eight hours of arrival and that women offer themselves to a newcomer by telephone. Since, as every one knows, the Soviet government has taken a strong line against prostitution, and since the hotels for foreigners are communal enterprises and are subjected to strict supervision on the part of the authorities, we can scarcely doubt that these ladies of easy virtue are not merely tolerated, but are directly employed to glean information.

It was owing to the fact that I was given a wrong telephone number that I spent my first month in Moscow, not in one of the "smart" hotels, but in a boarding-house of ordinary type, the Novo-Moskovskaya, in Baltshug Street. Myself excepted, the boarders in this modest establishment (which had recently been done up and was therefore clean) were all Russians, and save for one of the lift-boys none of the staff were communists. I came in time to realise that the waiters and chambermaids who were so ready to pour out their woes to a stranger and to voice their sorrow concerning the conditions that prevailed in Russia were speaking in good faith; but to begin with it was natural, in view of all I had heard before coming to Russia, that I should regard them as spies and provocative agents of the Cheka.<sup>1</sup> I presume they still think of me as a foreign communist, the reason being that—partly because of the before-mentioned suspicions, and partly because I hoped to draw them out—I showed myself unsympathetic to their complaints, and defended the Soviet system by the use of the official arguments. The reader will, no doubt, be surprised that these underlings should have dared to express their dislike of the bolshevik regime so freely. Their indiscretion in this respect was all of a piece with what I had

<sup>1</sup> The word "Cheka" is composed of the initials of the two Russian words meaning "Extraordinary Commission", this being the name given, until a few years ago, to the political secret police of the bolsheviks. Now this secret police is known as the "State Political Administration" being spoken of for short as the Ogpu.

subsequently occasion to observe again and again. Russians are primitive folk, and, even to-day, despite manifold intimidations and much unhappy personal experience, they are far too impulsive and far too free from inhibitions to find it easy to hold their tongues. In some instances, however, especially among the droshky drivers, it was plain enough that abuse of the bolsheviks was designed to make the foreign "bourgeois" lavish with his tips.

I did not escape the usual advances from prostitutes. Since my hotel did not lend itself to this sort of intermezzo, an approach was made from another quarter. Visiting the office of the Moscow Soviet to get the necessary permit of residence, I came across a clerk who, in contrast to his colleagues, was neither rude nor disdainful, but extremely civil and friendly. He did not restrict his conversation to official matters, but, having finished his business, went on to ask me how I liked Moscow, whether I had made many acquaintances, and so on. Might he call on me? It would have been churlish to refuse. Next day he turned up at the hotel, and, after many oriental circumlocutions, proposed to supply me with political news-items. I countered this proposal by explaining that in my work I had no need of secret political intelligence. He then bade farewell. Next day he called again, saying that he had happened to be passing through the street with his fiancée, and thought he would like to drop in. How was I getting on in Moscow? Was I married? Might he introduce his young lady? With formal politeness I answered that I should be honoured by the introduction. Obviously he had never expected me to interpret his words literally, but, finding it necessary to speak more plainly, he proceeded to ask whether I had any "personal" interest in his future bride. "Of course not!" I rejoined, and thereupon he departed. I went to the window, and a minute later I saw him going down the street arm in arm with a provocatively dressed girl. Since it seemed to be possible that the man's object was to make money out of me in one way or another, I decided to report the affair

to the "competent authority", which in my case was the Press Department of the Russian Foreign Office. There I was informed that unless I would give the name of the man who had approached me, nothing could be done. I answered that if he was only a poor devil "on the make" I had no wish to get him into trouble, and that my only reason for reporting the matter had been to avoid any suspicion of holding converse with persons of dubious character—for I presumed that the authorities might be keeping me, a stranger, under observation. My interlocutors were a little embarrassed, not being used to such frankness. There the matter rested, and I had no further visit from my friend in the employ of the Moscow Soviet.

### 3. WORKING-CLASS DELEGATIONS

In the summer of 1925, at my hotel, I had another experience bearing upon the treatment of foreigners in Moscow, an experience which seemed to me much more significant than the before-mentioned advances of a petty spy. Coming home one day towards noon I found posted in the passage leading to my room a paper bearing the following inscription in blue pencil: "The tenants of all the rooms on the first landing and of rooms so and so upon the second landing must vacate these rooms by six o'clock in the evening owing to the arrival of the German working-class delegation. The persons concerned must seek accommodation in other hotels." Since I was one of the "persons concerned", I rang up the Press Department of the Foreign Office and was able to arrange that I should not be evicted so summarily, but should be provided with a room on another landing. While I was carrying my trunks upstairs, all the other guests were vacating the rooms named without venturing a word of protest. Thus did I obtain my first clear idea of what it meant to be a citizen of the Soviet Union. In the evening I asked the hotel manager, an honest fellow enough, who had at one time been a manual

worker, why I had not been left in peace in my own room, for surely the room to which I had been compelled to move would have done just as well for one of the members of the German delegation. "Your fellow-countrymen want to be together", he answered with a smile. I have already mentioned that the hotel had recently been done up, and will now add that it had been newly furnished, though very simply. The reader can, therefore, understand my astonishment when, next day, several vans arrived laden with fine furniture, with strips of carpets which were laid down in the previously bare passages, when the coarse bed-linen and towels were replaced by articles of much better quality, when carpets made their appearance in the bedrooms, and so on. It is natural enough that the proletarian State should pay honour to its proletarian guests, and I should have found nothing to cavil at had these guests been lodged in one of the before-mentioned great hotels—just as they are speeded up and down the railways in first-class carriages. As far as the Soviet authorities were concerned, there were two reasons against this. First of all, their proletarian guests must not come into contact with foreigners of bourgeois origin; and, secondly, they must be lodged in a "typical Soviet proletarian hotel". Thus the hotel refurnished to lodge and to impress the first German working-class delegation was nothing but a "Potemkin village".<sup>1</sup>

But this was not all. The members of the delegation were driven about in a dozen or so of smart private cars, for it seemed that the Kremlin garage must have been emptied for this sole purpose. Day and night the motors stood before the house, replacing the rickety lorries which usually parked there and the dirty old droshkies drawn by starving nags. When, following my usual custom, I went to eat my midday meal in the small dining-room on the top storey, my way was barred by waiters (not members of the usual staff) who told me

<sup>1</sup> Show villages constructed by Potemkin along the route of a royal progress made by Catherine the Great.



bluntly that the room was reserved for the delegation. Next morning I went to take a cold tub in the only bathroom in the house. Once more I was stopped by strangers wearing the hotel uniform who asked me what I wanted. "Take a bath? The bath is reserved for the delegation!" In a word, the members of this German working-class delegation were, quite unknown to themselves, so closely watched that during the whole week in which I lived under the same roof with them I was unable to exchange a single word with any of my compatriots. An acquaintance of mine, a Russian who looked like a western European, was stopped in the street by two members of the delegation who—like all the others—were completely ignorant of Russian. Speaking German to him, they asked him the way. Replying in the same tongue, he said he was going in their direction, and would guide them. He had taken only a few steps in their company when another Russian plucked him by the sleeve, showed him an authorisation, and whispered: "Citizen, these are members of the German working-class delegation. I advise you to quit their company at once!"

About a fortnight later I was far away from Moscow, in Kazan, the capital of the Tartar Soviet Republic. The hotel in the main street was a Russian provincial inn of the worst kind, dirty, bug-infested, neglected. On the second day of my stay some furniture vans arrived, bringing new writing-tables, new wardrobes, strips of drugget for the passages, bed-linen, etc. "Is the place going to be done up?"—"Not a bit of it", answered the porter. "The German working-class delegation is coming here to-morrow."

A year after this, in August 1926, making an excursion from Irkutsk, I was strolling through the little village of Listvinnichnoye on Lake Baikal in eastern Siberia. Before the war there was a fine though not very large fleet of trading vessels on the lake, the most beautiful and one of the largest of the inland seas of Asia. Hardly any of these ships had remained seaworthy. Some of the wreckage was beached

near Listvinnichnoye. There was also a ruinous old wharf. Of a sudden I heard the noise of hammers and of saws. Turning a corner I found men busily at work on one of the wrecks. Carpenters were replacing mouldered planks; riveters were affixing new plates; painters were making lavish use of the best white paint; from a primitive crane, there was hanging a new engine, ready to be fitted. A quaint notion passing through my mind, I inquired: "Are you expecting a German working-class delegation?"—"Of course! They'll be here from Irkutsk in a week!" I had been travelling in Siberia several weeks, and had forgotten that by now the second German working-class delegation must have arrived in Russia.

#### 4. OTHER INTERMEZZI

In November 1927, for the decennial celebration of the November revolution, in addition to thousands of workers from all countries, a number of foreign intellectuals had been invited to attend. One of these guests, a Berlin academician, told me the following story. At a gala evening in the Moscow opera house there was sitting in the next box to his a German proletarian who was drinking in the glories of the place as if intoxicated. During a pause in the show, the workman leaned over the partition and whispered to my friend: "Isn't it wonderful, Comrade? Our Russian comrades built this glorious temple!" The academician ventured to point out that the theatre must be at least a century old, but the information was rejected with scorn. "You must be misinformed, for our Russian comrades told us themselves that they had built it!" I do not suppose for a moment that this preposterous misstatement emanated from one of the chief bolshevik bear-leaders, for in contemporary Soviet Russia the authorities do not paint with such crude colours. Still, the incident fits into the picture. Some of the members of the 1927 working-class delegation had actually been provided with new suits of clothes!

But the foreigners who are overwhelmed by the charms of a joy-ride through Soviet Russia are far from being exclusively persons of working-class status. Many of the three hundred foreign intellectuals who, in 1925, participated in the bi-centenary celebrations of the Petersburg Academy of the Sciences were a prey to the same glamour. These visitors were royally entertained, no expense being spared to give them a "true impression" of the prosperity of a proletarian State. Since at this epoch I was in Turkestan, I cannot record personal knowledge of the visit in question; but from the articles published by some of the visitors after their return home I have good reason to believe that they were quite as credulous as the working-class guests.

Near Moscow there is a small and insignificant textile factory. Not a "show place" at all, and not even served by a branch line of railway. I found it exceedingly difficult to get permission to inspect this factory. "Why do you want to see that place in particular? We have more interesting textile factories here within the town of Moscow!"—"But the very thing I want is to visit an ordinary, everyday factory, which is not regarded as interesting." In the end, I went. I know nothing about textiles. The factory had an ordinary aspect; the stuffs being made were rough, but rough textiles are needed as well as fine ones. I was shown the statistics of production, and carefully-drawn diagrams with vigorously ascending curves. "We have exceeded the pre-war production by 21 per cent", said with modest pride the manager of the works, who, before the revolution, had been a lorry-driver in the employ of the same factory. I asked the women who were at work there the customary questions about their wages and their hours, and received the stereotyped reassuring answers. Wages, I was told, were higher, and hours were shorter. My companions who had brought me to the works and were taking me round had moved on a few paces. I lingered by one of the looms admiring the skill with which the woman in charge of it was manipulating it. Suddenly this woman—she was elderly

—leaned towards me and whispered hastily and excitedly in my ear: "The stuff we're weaving here is trash. Ask them to show you samples of the pre-war production!" I was taken aback, not only by the substance of the remark and by the venomous tone in which it was made, but by the fact that it was made in German. "Are you a German?"—"Yes, German by origin, but my parents were nationalised as Russians. You'd better catch up. Your friends are on the look-out for you!" For the woman's sake I hope that this interlude remained unnoticed! Seizing a favourable moment, as if spontaneously, I asked one of my conductors to show me samples of the textiles produced in pre-war days. The request was so unexpected that, without protest, he complied. Before the war this factory had turned out a very fine and heavy corduroy for uniforms; now it produced a "shoddy" consisting three-fourths of cotton and the rest of shredded woollen remnants. My attention was drawn to the fact that the "quality" of the material was fabulously improved by size and dressing. Perhaps one should not be too critical. In Russia, where scarcity is widespread, quantity is more important than quality. Still, I learned from this to draw inferences concerning the Soviet statistics of production, and realised that I should have quitted that little textile factory under a very false impression if the old woman had not given me a pointer.

The weather was intensely hot when, one September day in the year 1925, I was returning from a visit to the ruins of Old-Merv towards the little railway station of Bairam-Ali in Turkestan. It was with reluctance that I complied with an urgent request to inspect a cotton-ginning enterprise in the oasis there. The factory was not running at the moment, for it was being reconstructed. "When the reconstruction has been effected, our production will be 50 per cent in advance of that of pre-war days." The manager substantiated this assertion with precise data concerning the number of machines in the old days and the new. An acquaintance of mine, one of the workers in the enterprise, confirmed these data when I

asked him about them. I busied myself making notes while we were drinking tea and some atrocious vodka. Suddenly I noticed that one of those present was laughing at me. "Have you been pulling my leg? Have the figures been falsified?"—"Oh, there's nothing wrong with the figures except one trifle. The machines in this fine new enterprise of ours have been assembled from the three factories that they used to work in the neighbourhood."

He who is not able to speak Russian, he who cannot talk to all and sundry without an interpreter, he who has to follow a prescribed line of travel, he who must go whithersoever he is told, he (and this is of supreme importance) who cannot stay in Russia long enough to see through the artifices of the official language of the Soviet government—must not expect to observe in Russia anything more than the merest externals, whether in good things or in bad. The Grand Hotel is not a proper introduction to Russian life.

*BOOK TWO*

THE BOLSHEVIK STATE



## CHAPTER FOUR

### THE STATE OF FORTY-SEVEN STATES

#### 1. A MOTLEY POPULATION

THE bolshevik State does not exercise its tyranny solely in the field of politics and economics. Imperiously and inexorably it forces its way into the most hidden recesses of daily life. There is no exaggeration in saying that in the public affairs of Russia to-day nothing happens without a political meaning and purpose, without a bearing on the maintenance of the Soviet power. A supreme irony of the twentieth century is the fact that the Marxian doctrine, which foretold the dying-out of the State, should in Russia have established the idea of the State upon so tyrannical a foundation, have enthroned the State more despotically than perhaps ever before in human history. The bolsheviks do not deny this characteristic of their system, merely contending that their orgy of State omnipotence is transitional—a passing phenomenon necessitated by the class struggle, and destined to disappear when class distinctions cease to exist. Enough to say, in comment, that the hypertrophy of the State in Soviet Russia advances at the same rate as that at which the classes hostile to the Soviet organisation are systematically suppressed and eradicated.

There is yet another reason for bringing the peculiarities of the contemporary Russian State into the foreground of the present account of Red Russia. The Russians are pre-eminently people who think and feel politically. Earthbound as they are, they are by nature disinclined for abstract thought. What interests a Russian in a problem is not its epistemological or philosophical aspect, but its relation to practical life. Russian philosophy is moral philosophy. Russian imaginative writing is, first, last, and all the time, ethical



speculation, ethical inference from everyday experience, ethical precept designed to regulate conduct; it is sociology; it is politics. The predominance of political thought and action (in this wider sense of the term "political") is obvious on every page of the Russian novel, and no less so in every conversation we may have with the Russian worker or peasant. Actual social conditions are the invariable starting-point of any spiritual or intellectual activity in a Russian.

The constitution of Soviet Russia, the fundamental law of the U.S.S.R., presents itself in the political vesture of a treaty between the various independent Soviet republics now extant in what was aforesaid the land of the tsars. If those who drafted the constitution had been sticklers for accuracy, they would have spoken of a "League of States and Federations", inasmuch as four of the seven federated republics are themselves composite structures, made up of individual republics and autonomous territories. The desire of the bolsheviks to establish separate State structures for each and all of the nationalities and tribes now living on Russian soil has made the map of modern Russia a remarkably variegated one. The Soviet Union consists to-day of no less than forty-seven States. Moreover, if we compare the political map with an ethnographical one, we shall be inclined to agree that the "principle of nationality" and the "right of self-determination" have celebrated unprecedented triumphs on Soviet soil. But we shall also opine that, from the political standpoint, the bolsheviks have disintegrated their realm in an amazing and a dangerous way. The foreign world is, in general, disposed to look at the matter thus superficially, and such a view is encouraged alike by bolshevik and by anti-bolshevik propaganda. On closer examination, however, the picture of the national conditions obtaining in Soviet Russia undergoes an important change. Only half of the population of the U.S.S.R. is supplied by the Great Russians, that is to say by the national stock which before the revolu-

tion held sway over all the other nations and tribes in the area concerned. Nationally the Russian realm is, in very truth, more disintegrated than any other, containing as it does, not only a number of different Slav stocks, but also many other peoples which are not Slav at all. In the long course of Russian history these alien tribes had become so much accustomed to a foreign dominion that they had for the most part ceased to regard the Great Russian yoke as oppressive—and certainly it was less oppressive than the rule of the Tartars had been. Their national instincts were slumbering.

The attitude of a small nationality ruled by a more powerful one is seen most plainly in times of trouble and distress. During the collapse of the year 1917, the White Russians, the Ukrainians, the Tartars, and other, less numerous, Mongol and Finnish-Ugrian stocks included within the Russian area, remained calm, whereas the Poles and also the Baltic nationalities declared themselves independent of Russia, and so did the tribes of Caucasia and Turkestan. When, after the seven months' interregnum, the bolsheviks seized power, they tried to effect the forcible subjugation of these seceding nations, among whom the Ukrainians were now numbered. They were successful in their endeavours except as regards the Poles and the Baltic peoples. Simultaneously, however, the bolsheviks were proclaiming the freedom of the nations and the tribes. During the first years of their rule what we now call Soviet Russia did not exist in point of form, for there were a number of independent Soviet republics, each of which was nominally entitled to make treaties with foreign States. Not until the year 1924 was the governmental unity of the Russian realm re-established by the foundation of the Union of Socialist Soviet Republics (U.S.S.R.). By the constitution thus established, four States combined to form the new federation:

1. The Russian Socialist Federal Soviet Republic (R.S.F.S.R.);

2. The Ukraine Socialist Soviet Republic;
3. The White Russian Socialist Soviet Republic;
4. The Transcaucasian Socialist Federal Soviet Republic.

In March 1925 there were added to these two more federal republics which had previously been provinces of the R.S.F.S.R.:

5. The Turkoman Socialist Soviet Republic, with only 800,000 inhabitants;
6. The Uzbek Socialist Soviet Republic.

In the year 1929, as an additional member of the Union, there was superadded:

7. The Tadzhik Socialist Soviet Republic.

## 2. SINGULAR SOVEREIGNTY

Each of these federal republics has its own constitution. The U.S.S.R. has, however, reserved for itself the main powers of State, retaining control of foreign policy, military and naval affairs, finance, foreign trade, economic planning, transport, mining, forestry, irrigation, legislation, popular education, hygiene, statistics, the right of amnesty, political police, and, since 1929, agriculture. It produces a rather strange impression to read, immediately after the long list of reservations (the enumeration of which, as a, b, c, etc., uses up nearly all the letters of the alphabet!), that, "beyond these limits each united republic exercises its sovereign authority independently", and that the U.S.S.R. "protects the sovereign rights of the united republics". Thereafter it is expressly stated that "each united republic retains the right of free withdrawal from the Union". The real nature of the "sovereignty" of the federal republics is shown by article 20 of the constitution, which gives the Central Executive Committee of the U.S.S.R. the right to suspend or repeal decrees of the Soviet Congresses and of the Central Executive Committees of the individual republics. We shall see later that the conditions under which the Communist Party holds sway

make it impossible for any sort of independent will to manifest itself in Soviet Russia without the approval of the central authorities in Moscow. To talk of a political right of self-determination in the case of the various nationalities of Russia is an abuse of terms. Not that the Soviet government is to be unconditionally blamed for thus withholding effective sovereignty, since many of these subordinate nationalities would not know what use to make of complete freedom, and, if granted it, would probably soon be glad enough to return to the bosom of the mighty Russian realm. This is certainly true of such stocks as the Kazan Tartars and other tribes along the Volga; and it may be true likewise of Ukraine. A general popular referendum in Ukraine would doubtless voice a decision in favour of the repudiation of contemporary bolshevik Moscow, though even then it might be questionable whether this would be the expression of a true desire for national independence. Matters are different, however, in the Caucasian region and in Turkestan. The inhabitants were conquered by force of arms as recently as the last century, and have not yet forgotten their sometime national freedom. When the tsarist regime collapsed, they promptly declared their independence, and down to the year 1924 they continued to fight fiercely against resubjugation. Muscovite domination of these outlying areas is on all fours with the colonial rule of any other great power.

### 3. CULTURAL AUTONOMY

But although the Soviet government does not accord political freedom to its non-Russian subjects, it certainly grants them a fair measure of cultural autonomy. No doubt the educational activities of the bolsheviks are carried on within the narrow framework of communist doctrine. Nonetheless, for many of the nationalities of the Russian realm, culture restricted within the bounds of Red formulas signifies an advance. This is especially manifest in the regions where

Mohammedanism is the prevailing creed—among the Tartars, the Uzbeks, the Buriats, the Tunguses, and various tribes belonging to the Mongolian and Turko-Tatar stocks. No one who has first-hand acquaintance with the life of these races can deny that a Red school, a bolshevik reading-room, a village soviet, is an important acquisition. To give an instance: in Turkestan (which is almost as backward as Afghanistan), as late as 1925 I found that all the women were still veiled and lived the retired life of the harem. Here the vigorous educational work of the Soviet government was the first step towards the liberation of woman. Again, in the case of the Kalmuks and the Buriats, who while under the sway of the lamas have been completely neglected, attempts are being made to convey elementary ideas of civilisation by migratory missions. Such examples could be multiplied. No unprejudiced observer can deny that the bolsheviks are honestly trying to effect a cultural advance among the more backward nationalities in their realm.

One peculiarity of bolshevik policy as regards the minor nationalities is the cultivation of the native speech. The *Soviet Union Year Book* informs us that the population of the U.S.S.R. is composed of about two hundred different nationalities, and for even the smallest of these Moscow provides administration, schools, newspapers, and libraries in the local tongue. To this end the Red State, impoverished though it is, devotes considerable sums of money. The administrators who work in the various autonomous domains have, as part of their official duty, to master the local speech, and must pass examinations therein. A good many of the autonomous tribes of the Union have hitherto had only a colloquial dialect, not making use of any method of writing, and in these cases, acting on the orders of the Soviet government, competent persons have provided what was lacking. The authorities have to make the best of the matter, have to put up with the disadvantage of this divergence of tongues, have to meet the expense of printing all laws and ordinances in about fifty

languages. Another good feature of Soviet policy in these matters is that in the autonomous areas offices are filled as far as possible by persons of indigenous origin, this applying equally to a territorial president and to a village policeman. Even though most of the officials are communists, and are therefore subservient to Moscow in all important matters, the fact remains that they represent local interests much better than did the Great Russian officials in the days of the tsar. Moreover, this policy promotes the self-esteem of the various peoples and tribes.

The reader will not fail to realise that the bolshevik policy towards "subject nationalities" puts many European nations to the blush. Think of the Italians, the Czechs, and the Poles. One can but recommend them to send committees of inquiry to Moscow! If Russia, in spite of the existence of these formidable alien minorities, ventures to grant cultural autonomy, how much easier would this be for the European nations I have just named.

~~One thing necessary to say~~ ~~is that~~, indeed, must not be overlooked, namely that in the bolshevik conception of the State the idea of the nation plays no part as a ruling factor. Although the Great Russians are culturally and numerically much stronger than any other element in the U.S.S.R., and though a considerable majority of the positions of supreme power in Soviet Russia are held by Great Russians, the Soviet Union has by no means so marked a Great Russian national stamp as had the realm of the tsars. The supreme authority in the Communist Party has remained international down to the present day. Abroad there has, of late, been a tendency to forget this. During the first year after the establishment of the Red State its leadership could not have a typically Russian visage owing to the great number of Jews in Lenin's entourage. After Lenin's death, when the growth of an antisemitic trend within and without the Party led to the downfall of the most outstanding among the Jewish bolsheviks, Stalin, a man from the Caucasus, rose to power, and gathered round him a bodyguard of his fellow-countrymen.

Yet it would be wrong, even now, to speak of a "Caucasian" or "Asiatic" regime. The composition of the ruling group is still motley enough to make Soviet rule supra-national or supra-Russian.

To some extent this mitigates the dangers attaching to the maintenance and promotion of national consciousness among the various stocks. No doubt these lesser nationalities find the yoke of the Moscow dictatorship heavy, but it no longer seems to them so much a foreign dominion as the pressure exercised by a particular class or group which exists also among themselves and whose sway is incorporated primarily in the personalities of native-born communists. The Ukrainian worker or trader, when he rails against the authorities, usually directs his invectives, not towards the heads of the Communist Party in Moscow, but towards his own Red fellow-countryman whose behaviour as a member of the town soviet or the village council has annoyed him. It actually gives him a surter influence of the alien ~~dominion~~, longer has Russian official who used to be sent from Moscow to dominate over him.

#### 4. NATIONAL TENSIONS

As already said, in bolshevik governmental circles national feeling, local jingoism, is extinct; but there are plenty of national tensions as between one federal republic and another; and there is still more friction of this kind between the "autonomous" subordinate republics. Let me give a couple of examples. In the Kazak Autonomous Socialist Soviet Republic, there are, besides the Kirghisians, who constitute the "main" nationality, a good many Russian Cossacks and also German colonists. By political oppression and other vexations, the Kirghisians are now trying to revenge themselves for what they suffered in former days at the hands of the proud Cossacks; and they bleed the German peasants

white by an unjust distribution of the land and by heavy taxation. As for my other incident, it relates to the adjacent Transcaucasian Soviet Republics of Azerbaidjan and Georgia which are jealous of one another. When the Georgian government determined to provide an electric power-station for the supply of Tiflis, the capital, the most economic source of energy would have been petroleum, seeing that the oil wells of Baku were so close. But Baku is the capital of Azerbaidjan, and the Georgians had no fancy for making Tiflis thus dependent upon its rival. They therefore (I write advisedly "therefore", though the Georgians will not acknowledge the true reason even to-day) established the water-driven power-station of Semi-Aftshala, an extremely expensive affair, and one which Tiflis, having few industries, will not be able to turn to full account for many years to come.

## 5. RUSSIAN JEWRY

It is now necessary to say a word or two about the Jewish problem in the Soviet Union. For nearly a decade, not only the foreign world, but even the Russians themselves, believed that the bolshevik revolution had been "made" by Russian Jews, and that the Jews ruled the Soviet State. It was only the rise to power of Stalin, a Caucasian, which dissipated this fancy. To-day the bugbear of "Jewish bolshevism" continues to seem real for those strange creatures who regard William II and ninety-nine per cent of all prominent Europeans as of Jewish origin.

This alleged domination of Russia by bolshevik Jews never really existed. Lenin was not a Jew, but an offshoot from the Russian lesser gentry, and his face showed plainly enough that, like so many of his caste, he had Tartar blood in his veins. Now, the bolshevik revolution was far too much a product of Lenin's mind to bear a Jewish nationalist character. There was, of course, a reason for the belief that Jews were predominant during the early days of bolshevik Russia. In



actual fact until a few years ago the proportion of Jews among the bolshevik leaders was considerably greater than the proportion of Jews among the Russian population in general. The reason is very simple. Under the tsars the Jews were the most grossly oppressed of all the oppressed nationalities, with the result that the Jewish intelligentsia provided an especially large number of leaders to the revolutionary parties—and these Jews, being possessed of great political acumen, knew how to keep themselves in the limelight. Moreover, they were more inclined to join the Bolshevik Party than any other because this was the only genuinely international party, not being, like the others, inspired with Great Russian prejudices. Any one who studies history objectively must admit that the horrors of the revolution should not be regarded as mainly the work of Jewish bolsheviks, often though this accusation has been repeated. If Zinovieff's doings in Petersburg and Bela Kun's in the Crimea are referred to, it will be sufficient to point out that like atrocities were committed by bolsheviks of Great Russian, Polish, and Lettish nationality, and to think of the deeds of certain Chekist women who were not Jewesses.

Although during the first years of the bolshevik regime so many Jews held sway, the broad masses of Russian Jewry did not thereby gain the smallest advantage. The class war waged by the bolsheviks was directed against Jewish traders no less keenly than against those of Russian or Turcoman nationality. The persecution of the religious-minded, the attacks on the churches, were as fierce in their incidence upon the rabbis and the synagogues as upon the Orthodox popes and the Protestant pastors, as upon the Christian churches and cathedrals. Here and there, indeed, the relatives of Jewish bolsheviks derived advantage from the family feeling which is so strong among Jews, being given posts or having work found for them to which they were not entitled on the ground of their "social origin". But even in this matter it would be a mistake to generalise. I know of more than one instance

in which a Jewish Party-member has publicly disavowed his parents on the ground that these still clung to "religious superstition", or for some similar reason.

To make what follows comprehensible to the western reader I must now explain that the social stratification of Russian Jewry is very different from that which obtains among European Jews. The Russian Jew is not, generally speaking, either a trader or an intellectual. The great mass of Russian Jews consists of handicraftsmen of one kind and another, and, to a less extent, of ordinary workers and peasants. Let me add, to avert a possible misunderstanding, that no one in Russia would ever think of regarding the Jews as "Russians professing the Israelitish faith". For every Russian, and for every Russian Jew as well, the Jews are a people, a nationality, like the Tartars, the Volga Germans, the Georgians, etc. Consequently there does not exist in Russia a Jewish problem in the racial sense.

The Jewish nation has occupied a peculiar position in the Soviet policy of land settlement, for none of the other nationalities of Russia has received so much land and such good land as have Jewish peasants in the Crimea. In southern Russia this preferential treatment of the Jews has made bad blood, especially in regions where land has been taken from peasants of other races for the purposes of Jewish settlement. The matter in question has a peculiar origin. The formation of Jewish settlements on the land is a card played by the bolsheviks in their struggle against England. The Soviet government has done its utmost to promote Jewish colonisation as a counterblast to the British scheme of Jewish colonisation in Palestine. The Soviet authorities have carried on a campaign against Zionism with a passion which will never be understood except by those who take into account the practical relationships between Zionism and the movement to maintain British prestige. Above all, Moscow has done its utmost to beat the big drum in the United States as regards the scheme of Jewish colonisation, this hubbub being

designed to further the ardently desired "recognition" of Soviet Russia by America. Thus the preference shown for Jewish peasants has very little to do with either a special fondness for Jewry or exceptional power supposed to be held by Jews in bolshevik circles. It is merely part of Soviet policy. For the rest, the Jewish settlements, which seemed promising enough at first, have for a long time been in an increasingly bad way. As soon as recognition by the United States ceased to be regarded as an urgent matter, they were neglected by the Soviet authorities. Conditions have been made still worse, now that the Jewish peasant colonies have, like peasant Russia in general, been subjected to the thralldom of enforced collectivisation.

The general impression of "Jewish dominion" was intensified by the manifestations of the "New Economic Policy" introduced in the year 1922, which gave renewed opportunities for private trade. This was the period in which the newly rich became able to make a display and to live luxuriously in contrast with the broad masses of the Russian population. Russian Jews were quick to seize their opportunity, and, primitive by nature, were prone to crude display. Although these days are long since over and the New Economic Policy has been replaced by a definitive campaign for the annihilation of private trade, in the towns of Russia the primitive Ashkenazic Jews still produce the impression of being the only prosperous inhabitants. They cannot resist the impulse to make a show and put on airs as soon as they are able to make a trifling improvement in their position, where Russians in similar circumstances are eager to avoid doing anything that will show the authorities that they are putting money by. In Moscow attention was drawn to Jewish families which had been twice sent to Siberia for "speculation", but even after their second return from exile continued to behave in a manner which made them eyesores to the Cheka.

## 6. ANTISEMITISM

If we are to understand the attitude, as far as theory is concerned, of the bolsheviks towards the Russian antisemitic movement, we must know something about the position of the Jews in Russia during the reign of the last two tsars.

Already in the days of Alexander III the relations between the government and the Jews had grown worse. Statesmen with modern ways of thinking, such as Count Witte, who endeavoured to effect the gradual abolition of the exceptional laws directed against the Jews, had to encounter a stubborn resistance on the part of the reactionary officialdom and an utter lack of sympathy as far as the crown was concerned. Indeed, these endeavours at reform, these attempts to emancipate the Jews, aroused in the tsar's mind suspicions as to the loyalty of the would-be reformer. The exceptional laws were extraordinarily severe. The Jews were only allowed to live in some of the western provinces (Poland, White Russia, West Ukraine); they could not acquire landed property and were not allowed to enter State service; the number of Jewish students at the universities must not exceed ten per cent. Bad as the conditions were under Alexander III, they became worse under Nicholas II, for now to the formal deprivation of rights were superadded long-continued and fierce persecutions of the Jews, which, when Pleve became minister for home affairs, were actually instigated by the government. It is true that Tsar Nicholas did not expressly approve these abominations, but from marginal notes in his handwriting on public documents we have evidence that he tolerated them.<sup>1</sup>

Since it was a fundamental principle of bolshevism to turn everything upside down, the bolsheviks naturally repudiated antisemitism with the utmost indignation, declaring it to be one of the most hateful manifestations of the bad old days. The use of the word "zhid" as an abusive name for a Jew was penalised, and antisemitism in all its forms was regarded

<sup>1</sup> Cf. Korostowetz, Graf Witte, Berlin, 1929, p. 105 et seq.

as counter-revolutionary. Of course the antisemitic sentiments of the broad masses of the people were intensified by such measures, which, in conjunction with the fact that a good many Jewish bolsheviks held high office, created an impression that the government was giving undue preference to the Jews. What could no longer be said openly, was said all the more emphatically behind closed doors. The legend of the bolshevik-Jewish regime originated, and speedily made its way abroad, seeming to be substantiated by the fact that Lenin's closest associates, or at any rate those whose names were best known abroad, were almost all Jews: Trotsky-Bronstein, Radek-Sobelsohn, Joffe, Kopp, Kameneff-Finkelstein, Scheinmann, Sokolnikoff-Brilliant, and Zinovieff-Radomyslsky.<sup>1</sup>

After Lenin's death there was a change in the attitude of the Bolshevik Party towards antisemitism. By slow degrees Jewish bolsheviks began to disappear from leading and conspicuous positions. At first it seemed as if this were only a concession to popular sentiment, for high offices in the Party were still held by celebrated Jews like Zinovieff and Kameneff when Trotsky, Radek, and others had already formed an opposition and had fallen into disfavour. But when, in 1925 and 1926, the Zinovieff-Kameneff group likewise joined the opposition, and it became more and more obvious that Stalin was establishing a quasi-dictatorship, the policy of the Kremlin assumed a definitely antisemitic complexion. It is difficult, even now, to determine which was cause and which effect; but this much is certain, that, as time went on, almost all the leading Jewish bolsheviks became members of the opposition, with the result that they ceased to play a dominant role in the Party or the government. During these two years I travelled widely in the Russian provinces, where excellent but somewhat indiscreet bolsheviks provided me with ample proof of the systematic way in which the Jewish members of

<sup>1</sup> The world outside Russia continues obstinately to believe that Zinovieff's real name is "Apfelbaum". There is absolutely no warrant for this assertion.

the Party were being cold-shouldered. It is my opinion that, during his fight against Trotsky, Stalin tolerated if he did not actually encourage the growth of antisemitic trends within the Party. Naturally this attitude of the dictatorship had its due effect upon the masses, even though the leaders were paying lip-service to the doctrine that antisemitism was to be condemned. Walking to and fro in the streets, driving in public conveyances, visiting factories and workshops, one began once more to hear the word "zhid" and could observe that the police and the other authorities were taking no measures to interfere with the use of this invective. As time passed, especially during 1928 and 1929, things went from bad to worse, so that in all parts of the Russian realm there were outbursts of antisemitic violence, often tending to assume the character of the pre-revolutionary pogroms. A good deal of publicity was given to some of these incidents, and it became plain that the outrages had taken place with the tacit or open approval, not only of the workers, but also of the Party, trade-union, and professional organisations. These circumstances confirmed the impression already aroused by my knowledge of daily life in Soviet Russia that the general sentiment of the Russian population was antisemitic. In some of the cases that came into the law-courts, evidence was adduced to show that members of the Communist Party, and especially some of the Young Communists, had participated in reviling and maltreating Jewish proletarians.

I shall refrain from going into the details of these antisemitic excesses, which are in many cases unfit for publication, but shall give some instructive figures. In the mines of the Bokovo-Khrustalsky district between February 15, 1926, and November 20, 1928, Jewish miners to the number of 2,987 were engaged, not one of whom was able to keep his job, although some of them were experienced men. The "Rabochaya Gazeta" of Moscow, from which I take the foregoing figures, comments on the matter as follows: "It is easy enough to understand why the Jewish workers left the pit. Last summer twenty-

three Jews came to the Lugansk district from the province of Vitebsk. Hungry and ragged, they applied for work at the mines. Everywhere they were encountered with raillery. 'What are you up to, Abraham? Want a job as miner, do you? To be a petty trader in a town would suit you better!' Still, in the end, they were engaged. But the 'ragging' persisted. The foremen bullied them, refused to supply them with overalls, and would not give them vouchers for stores at the co-operative. In the bunk-houses, their lives were made intolerable. The other workers collected lice and bugs and put these vermin in their beds, took every opportunity of showering insults upon them, and never missed a chance of quarrelling with them. No one would help or protect them. The Party, the trade unions, and the Young Communist organisations held aloof. The Jewish workers stuck it out until autumn. Then they abandoned the unequal struggle, and gave up their jobs."

After the defeat of Trotsky and the opposition, the veiled struggle within the Party against the Jewish comrades became unmeaning. There is no longer any sign of it. Recently, certain Jews have been appointed to leading positions among the bolsheviks. As for the posts which do not give the holders a noteworthy political pull, now, as always, many of these are filled by Jews. The people's commissariats swarm with them; and Jews still exert an outstanding influence in the ministry for foreign and home trade, in the ministry for foreign affairs, and in the educational field. But less than ever do they hold effective sway in bolshevik concerns. It is time that the non-Russian world should realise this, for otherwise it will misunderstand bolshevism and will not know how best to cope with the bolsheviks when they are working to bring about the world revolution.

## 7. DANGERS

The dangers to which bolshevism and Russia are exposed from the Soviet policy towards the various nationalities out

of which the Russian population is made up, lie within the womb of the future. Should the Russian realm, thanks to some military disaster, once more find itself in a situation resembling that of 1917, it might well happen that the national consciousness of the various peoples and tribes (having been diligently fostered for years) would prove much more violently centrifugal than did the nationalisms of the Caucasus, Turkestan, and Ukraine in 1917. Moscow can hardly count on the gratitude of her spoiled children! The independence of the nationalities, even though at present it be no more than feigned, might also prove dangerous if here or there the local communists should become inspired with a longing for genuine independence. There is experience to guide us in this matter. At the Fifteenth Party Congress (December 1927) it was officially stated that more than half of the Ukrainian bolsheviks were members of or sympathetic to the opposition. Ukrainian nationalism had made such progress within the Party ranks that the circulation of Party newspapers printed in Great Russian had been forbidden by the Ukrainian Soviet authorities. In the spring of 1927 the leaders of the U.S.S.R. found it necessary to effect a vigorous purge among the Ukrainian comrades; and the fact that nearly all the Ukrainian people's commissariats had to be restaffed, will show how far the movement had gone. Moscow took the warning to heart, and refused to grant the more extreme of the Ukrainian demands in the linguistic field. Nevertheless, as the great political trials of 1929 and 1930 showed, Ukrainian nationalism raised its head again within the Party ere long. It must not be forgotten, however, that the dangers of the neo-Russian nationalist policy are nowhere so great as in Ukraine, which is strategically much exposed. It is upon Ukrainian nationalism and Ukrainian sympathy that the enemies of Soviet Russia (and especially the Poles) reckon in the event of war.

The policy of granting a "national right of self-determination" is a part of bolshevik window-dressing; but, even so, the Reds have good ground for pluming themselves upon



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their achievements in this field. It is not solely for reasons of principle that they have adopted the policy in question, and have, in a sense, "coddled" the motley crowd of nationalities. No doubt the artificially fostered Babel of tongues and the administrative disintegration are antagonistic to the socialist ideal of collectivism. But Moscow makes the best of these disadvantages and flaws, in the hope of educating the members of the various nationalities to become able-bodied Soviet citizens, in the hope that the pose of national enfranchiser will arouse admiration in those who, beyond the Red boundary posts, are engaged in propaganda on behalf of the Wilsonian scheme for the deliverance of oppressed and exploited nationalities. In the closing words of the first section of the Soviet constitution, the formation of the U.S.S.R. is declared to be "a new decisive step along the path of the union of the workers of all countries in a World Socialist Soviet Republic".

## CHAPTER FIVE

### DECORATIVE DEMOCRACY

#### I. THE PROLETARIAN CLASS-STATE

MARXIAN Socialists, the champions of proletarian socialism, refuse to admit that the parliamentary and democratic State has a classless character. No doubt in point of form all citizens are equal before the law and political equality prevails, but this has no practical significance, for the reason that personal, political, economic, and cultural liberties are abrogated owing to the control of the means of production by one class alone. As long as there are classes, the State will be a class-State, the ultimate purpose of the class which happens to be in power is to hold sway over all other classes. Social democrats of to-day, while in theory they still cling to this orthodox Marxian tenet, have abandoned it for practical purposes; on the other hand the bolsheviks, being disciples of Lenin, accept it without reserve. During the last two decades the social democrats have had direct experience in governing, and have learned thereby that the democratic State is a suitable instrument for the promotion of working-class welfare (the primary object of a working-class party or labour party). No doubt the bolsheviks are striving towards the same goal, but they are unwilling on that account to scrap the doctrine of the class struggle, which for them is identical with the rule of the Bolshevik Party. Therein lies the fundamental difference between the two great socialist parties.

In the opening section of the Soviet constitution we read: "Since the time of the formation of the Soviet Republics, the States of the world have been divided into two camps: the camp of capitalism and the camp of socialism." It is upon this wish-fantasy concerning a social cleavage in the body politic of all nations that the bolsheviks base their claim to

establish and maintain a class dictatorship in Russia. Soviet Russia is the only State in the world which frankly declares itself to be a class-State—in this case the State of the proletarian class ruling dictatorially. It has, of course, always been a moot point among Marxian thinkers what persons may properly be accounted proletarians. Gustav Landauer, for instance, denied the title of proletarian to a starveling brain-worker, saying that the possession of culture was a compensation for his lack of material ownership of part of the means of production. The latter-day social democrat (equally fervent Marxians) declare, on the other hand, that all those are proletarians whose income is in perpetual danger of falling below the subsistence minimum; and they therefore include among proletarians the lower grades of salaried employees and officials as well as the manual workers.

From the outset, Marxian socialism in Russia looked to the urban manual workers for support, seeing that these comprised "the most advanced group of the proletarians". Not until later, when the split between bolsheviks and mensheviks had taken place, did the bolsheviks come to style their party as that of the "workers and peasants", and they did so on purely opportunist grounds. Lenin, who had ever a keen eye for the realities of political life, had recognised that the urban industrial workers of Russia were too few in number to constitute the sole foundation of a great political party. But Lenin's early writings show clearly that the inclusion of the peasants was no more than a means to an end, his object being to ensure the victory of the revolutionary working class in its fight against the tsarist State. He had, however, to carry on a fierce campaign against the Marxism of the old school before the idea of the "smychka" (literally, a <sup>leash</sup>), the intimate union of workers and peasants, became a bolshevik dogma. It was characteristic of the man's courage and of his clear perception of the exigencies of political power, that he should not have attempted to enlist the support of those possessing petty employees and minor officials, but

should boldly have stretched out his hand towards what is by far the largest section of the Russian population—towards the peasantry, which seemed asocial in sentiment, and therefore unfitted to further Lenin's aims. Some only of his friends were sympathetic towards this "workers and peasants" policy. It was that policy which led to the first rift between Lenin and Trotsky, to a divergence of opinion which has outlived the former and still continues to bring about a deep cleavage in the bolshevik ranks.

Despite the "smychka" and despite their numerical disproportion, the urban proletarians have always constituted the main fighting force of the bolsheviks, and in no phase of the bolshevik dominion has the alliance between countryside and town been a genuine one. What the revolutionary workers of the towns really think of their peasant brethren is shown very plainly indeed by the Soviet constitution, for in chapter III, Section 9 of that document we read that "the Congress of Soviets of the Union of Socialist Soviet Republics is composed of representatives of town and township soviets on the basis of one deputy for each 25,000 electors and of representatives of provincial Congresses of Soviets on the basis of one deputy for each 125,000 of the population". Thus five peasants have the voting strength of one townsman. The chapters of the present work which deal with bolshevik economics will show how hostile to the peasants bolshevik policy has really been.

If the bolsheviks still continue to disseminate the fiction that the U.S.S.R. is a "workers' and peasants' State", this is only because, for propagandist reasons, they cannot get along without the fancy picture of Soviet democracy.

## 2. THE SOVIET IDEA

The Soviet idea was born during the Petersburg disturbances in October 1905. The first soviet (the Russian word for council), the "Petersburg Soviet of Workers' Deputies", was

not a Bolshevik invention, having originated spontaneously among the rebellious factory workers in the capital. Lenin, being already (before the creation of the Duma) convinced that the State he desired to establish would never be obtained through parliamentarism, was quick to grasp that soviets would serve his turn as germinal cells and foundations of a proletarian government. He now assimilated the Soviet idea with the same celerity as the idea of the *smychka*. It was characteristic of the pre-eminently practical calibre of his intelligence, that he hastened to amalgamate the two notions, explaining the failure of the Petersburg rising as due to the one-sidedness of the Petersburg Soviet, which had consisted only of delegates from the workers, and had had no representatives of the peasants or the soldiers. Thus was created the idea of the "Workers', Soldiers', and Peasants' Councils" which, thirty years later, was to become the slogan, first of the Russian, and then of the German revolution. From 1905 onwards, the rallying cry of the bolsheviks was "All Power to the Soviets!" Ere long, this catchword was being voiced, not only against the tsarist regime, but also against the men-sheviks, the social revolutionaries, and the bourgeois liberals. It was under this sign that the Leninists rose to power in November 1917. The All-Russian Congress of Soviets, in which the bolsheviks had gained a majority, became the supreme legislative authority in the realm.

### 3. SOVIET SUFFRAGE

In theory the right of election to the soviets is restricted to the proletariat, but in practice the bolsheviks have not been petty. In addition to the already mentioned privileged electors, the urban workers and the poor peasants, the suffrage has in the course of years been gradually extended to all the occupational groups whose members live exclusively by the "sale of their labour power": employees, the new officialdom, the soldiers and officers of the Red Army, salaried physicians,

technicians, engineers, lawyers, and professors. In 1925, the suffrage was granted to the great majority of the peasants; in 1926, to housewives; and in 1927, to cab-drivers. The upshot is that only 3·7 per cent of the adult population of the Soviet Union now lacks the right to vote, this disfranchised minority consisting mainly of the rich peasants, members of the mercantile class, and the sometime tsarist officials, officers, and nobles (so far as these have not, since tsarist days, done special service on behalf of the Soviet State). The legal provisions regarding the suffrage are vague enough to give the executive ample opportunity for arbitrarily granting it or withholding it. If before 1928 the authorities were generous in conceding the right to vote, this was because they wished to show the world how many loyal citizens the Soviet State possessed. In 1928, however, in order to "mitigate" the scarcity of housing accommodation and the general lack of commodities, a movement in the reverse direction began. The suffrage was withdrawn from tens of thousands of persons who had hitherto exercised it, with the result that the class character of the Soviet State has again become more obvious than it was during the optimistic years of reconstruction. All the same, the number of persons entitled to vote in Soviet Russia is still large enough to give the Soviet system a strong outward resemblance to the parliamentary democratic method of popular representation in western Europe.

The main difference between the two systems lies in electoral technique. Election to the soviets is neither secret nor direct nor equal. The elections take place at public meetings, usually summoned by the trade-union organisations, through an open vote for a list of candidates submitted by an electoral committee. After a number of speeches have been made, the chairman reads the list of candidates out loud and then says: "Let those who are in favour of the list raise their hands!"—"Contrary?"—"Abstentions?"—"Thank you, the list has been accepted." Sometimes the formula is

varied by asking whether any "supplementary candidates" are wanted, in which case a few "candidates of honour" (that is to say, notable bolsheviks) will be nominated and elected in like manner. Very rarely indeed does any one venture to put forward a name which is not agreeable to the ruling Party. Should this happen, however, and should such a candidate be elected, the Party will find ways and means of declaring the election invalid. The same thing will happen if any candidates important to the Party fail to secure election. But "obstruction" of this kind on the part of the electors very rarely happens, and during my four years in Russia I heard of no more than a few instances. The upshot therefore is that in the soviets of the first grade (in those of the towns at any rate), there are to be found only persons who have gained the Party approval. Matters are otherwise in the countryside where, in village after village, there may be no communists at all. The result of this was that before the days of the great persecution of the peasants, that is to say down to about 1928, in many of the village soviets there were to be found representatives of the well-to-do stratum of the peasantry.

But it is only the soviets of the first grade, the village soviets and the urban district soviets, which are elected directly in the way above described. There are no direct elections to the soviets of higher grade. The village soviets elect to the regional soviets, the latter to the district soviets, which in their turn elect to the provincial soviets, with the result that the final election to the All-Russian Soviet Congress (which has, more or less, the constitutional position of the German Reichstag) takes place at several removes from the individual electors of the country. By this method the Communist Party is enabled to filter the votes of the electors five or six times before the supreme authority is reached. But the system makes even a regional soviet "safe" from the bolshevik point of view. As to the fact that the suffrage in Soviet Russia is not equal, I have already pointed

out that a town elector has five times the voting strength of a countryman.

The All-Russian Congress of Soviets, the supreme parliament of the Workers' and Peasants' State, does not, like the parliaments of western lands, assemble as often as and whenever it pleases, but only once a year or once every two years, and then only for a week or a fortnight. Obviously, under these conditions, no practical work can be effected during the brief sessions of the Congress. What really goes on at this Russian federal parliament may be indicated by my personal experiences at the Congress of the year 1927.

#### 4. SOVIET PLAY-ACTING

Four and twenty hours before the Congress opens, the great Moscow opera-house where it meets is surrounded by a cordon of soldiers and police. The huge Ionic columns of the portico are decorated with bundles of red flags. The pediment disappears behind the flaming legend "All-Russian Congress of Soviets", surmounted at the apex by the hammer and sickle, the arms of the Workers' and Peasants' State. The doors are opened at nightfall. Outside the cordon, a few hundred sightseers have assembled to catch a glimpse of the notables coming to the Congress, but there are no signs of general public enthusiasm. The delegates arrive from all directions, most of them carrying thick bundles of documents under their arms. Without a printed permit no one is allowed to pass the cordon or the sentries stationed at the doors. I myself have to run the gauntlet of five of these sentries, each of whom scrutinised my card with the utmost care. At length I reach the orchestra, in front of but below the level of the stage. Here a press-table has been placed for the use of Russian and foreign journalists. The entire front of the stage is occupied by the tables for the presidium of the Congress, decked, like everything else in the opera-house, with red bunting. The chairman has not yet taken his seat. Behind



this table, filling the whole of the rest of the stage, are rows upon rows of tables for the 450 members of the Central Executive Committee—so to say, the “*crème de la crème*” of the bolsheviks. The stalls, the pit, and the dress circle provide accommodation for the delegates to the Congress, who number about 1,500. What used to be the royal box, in the middle of the dress circle, is reserved for the diplomatic corps. The other boxes, and all the upper tiers, give accommodation to various groups of privileged Soviet citizens.

Now it behoves them all, after the Russian manner, to wait: a quarter of an hour, another, and yet another. During this long pause I study the physiognomy of those who sit in the first rows of the Central Executive Committee: young workers; peasant girls in white coifs; working women wearing red handkerchiefs round their heads; a Tartar whose cap is embroidered with coloured silks; fat men of Mongolian type with oblique eyes; a small and apathetic woman in Caucasian attire, wearing a black veil. About her aspect there is something that interests, something exceptional. All the others are tediously average.

Suddenly there comes the sound of clapping. Looking for the reason, we espy behind the presidial table the bespectacled face and tousled head of Kalinin. Next comes Rykoff, a fair man who always makes me think of a French general of the days of the third Napoleon. Thereafter Yenukidse, a fat blond, who obviously hails from the Caucasus. Last of all—the applause grows louder—comes Stalin, wearing, as usual, a simple military tunic. The others take their places at the table, and Stalin sits a little behind them. We are all rather astonished to see the man of might there, for his proper place is farther back, with the Central Executive Committee, of which he is an ordinary member.

Mihail Ivanich Kalinin, chairman of the Union, opens the proceedings with a brief address in memory of recently deceased members of the Congress: Frunze, Dzerzhinsky, Krassin, and various persons whose names we have never

heard before, regarding whom the orator takes pains to declare that they were not members of the Party. We all stand, and from behind the stage come the strains of Chopin's funeral march. Next Kalinin, speaking rather casually but cheerfully as is his wont, proposes that the Congress shall have a presidium of eighty-five. Yenukidse is commissioned to read the nominations. The Congress applauds when well-known names are uttered, the loudness of the applause varying.

Buharin, Voroshiloff, and Tomskey are vociferously acclaimed; Kalinin and Rykoff even more so. Stalin, meanwhile, to our amazement, has seated himself at the presidial table between Rykoff and Yenukidse. When his name is read, the clapping almost deafens us, and once more every one in the hall stands up. Rykoff and Kalinin smile cheerfully as they too applaud the man who sits between them. Stalin shows no change of expression, and one gathers that this sensational acclamation is not altogether to his taste. Kalinin's popularity is of a different sort from Stalin's. A "voice" gives it the typical expression, for, when Kalinin is elected chairman of the Congress, there comes from somewhere the cry: "Three cheers for the All-Russian starost!"<sup>1</sup> Stalin seizes the opportunity of repaying the demonstration which has just been made on his account. He stands up, clapping vigorously, ostentatiously, giving the cue to the whole assembly to do the like.

The "voting" for the presidium is a very simple matter. As each name is read, Kalinin cursorily asks if there is any opposition or any abstention, but all the names are accepted without comment. Thus the votes are unanimous. What an ideal parliament! I think the chairman of our own Reichstag would turn green with envy at the sight.

After this formal opening, which the house has followed with close interest, the chairman of the Union Council of People's Commissaries begins the government report upon the principal home and foreign affairs of the Russian realm.

<sup>1</sup> In Old Russia, a starost was a village headman.

Before he has been speaking for a quarter of an hour, the audience of deputies has begun to thin, and by the time he has finished his speech the house is half empty. I wish to draw special attention to this as typical of all Soviet institutions, for bolshevik propaganda by cartoon and the written word is eager to inform us that the workers and peasants and their elected representatives—having now become politically mature—are keenly interested in the life of the community. In actual fact, nowhere in the world have I seen so much obvious boredom in public assemblies as in Red Russia. Nor need we be surprised at this when we remember how stereotyped and dull are the innumerable conferences, assemblies, addresses, and lectures in contemporary Russia.

The usual course of a Soviet congress shows plainly enough the lack of healthy impetus in Russian public life to-day, but I can give a yet more typical instance. In November 1927 came the decennial celebrations of the victory of the bolshevik revolution. As part of the festivities on this occasion there was held in Leningrad a commemorative sitting of the Central Executive Committee, whose climax was to be the promulgation of a "Manifesto to the Proletarians of Russia and of the Whole World". The manifesto, penned in the most high-flown verbiage and announcing various extensive changes in legislation and administration, was read by Rykoff at the sitting in question. Yet even during this epoch-making announcement, a majority of the deputies were in the smoking-room or in the restaurant, while of the representatives of the people who remained in the assembly room a considerable proportion were sleeping soundly.

## 5. FILTERED STATE AUTHORITY

The Central Executive Committee, designed to form a sort of "condensed parliament", is elected by the Congress from among its own members, and represents the Congress in the intervals between its sittings—for practical purposes all the

time. The C.E.C. has about 450 members, only about 380 of them being elected by the Congress, while the remaining 70 are representatives of the different nationalities, appointed by the separate republics and autonomous areas, but subject to acceptance by the Soviet Congress. These 70 men and women comprise what is called the Council of Nationalities. They correspond, more or less, in the Soviet constitution, to the Reichsrat of the German Republic; but they constitute so small a minority as against the members elected by the Congress that the nationalities cannot give any serious trouble in the C.E.C. Even the C.E.C. meets very seldom, only about thrice a year, for a fortnight at a time. Still, the work of the C.E.C. is of a somewhat more practical character than that of the Congress. I have attended some of its sittings, which are held in the Kremlin, and have heard very lively debates, which do not, however, have any decisive influence upon the proceedings of the government. They cannot have such an influence, were it only for the reason that laws are hardly ever initiated by the C.E.C., being merely laid before this substitute parliament for approval after they have been drafted. The C.E.C. only makes use of the constitutional right of initiative when for tactical reasons the Party wishes it to do so.

In the intervals between the sittings of the C.E.C., the legislative and executive authority is exercised by the presidium of the C.E.C., which is elected by the C.E.C. and consists, according to the constitution, of 21 members, but which in 1928 had 48 members. The actual powers of State are concentrated in the hands of this body whose connexion with the electorate is a remote one, for it is the residue of seven or eight filtrations. When any one imbued with the democratic ideas of the West criticises this system, bolshevik statesmen rejoin that even in western democracies the really important decisions are not made by the national assemblies, but by the leading groups of allied parties or by the leading group of one party alone. The presidium of the C.E.C. can, therefore,

they say, be compared with the executive of the British Labour Party. The rejoinder is, however, invalid, for in countries under parliamentary government a party or a group of parties only holds power so long as the majority of the people retain confidence in it, as shown by the exercise of a universal, direct, and secret suffrage. In Soviet Russia, according to the actual wording of the constitution, there is no such thing as party government, but a dictatorship of the workers and peasants, or, as the bolsheviks often phrase it, a democratic dictatorship of the working population. We have seen, however, that the electoral system and the whole structure of the Soviet edifice enable the supreme authority, the presidium of the C.E.C., to paralyse the votes and wishes of the proletarian electors whenever it thinks fit.

I do not wish to imply that "the voice of the proletariat" remains entirely without effect. In the electoral meetings of the primary electors, in the village soviets and in the town district soviets, it occasionally happens that some especially courageous elector ventures to criticise the government. At certain times and for special reasons such criticism (which will then usually be found to be accordant with the Party slogan of the moment) is actually welcomed—and may even have been initiated from on high. But as far as freedom within any State system is concerned, and in respect of the civic rights of the members of the community (in the present case, the working masses), matters are in the end determined by the electoral system and by the composition of the legislative and executive authorities. A popular government is more genuine in proportion as those who wield the powers of State are directly responsible to individual citizens. This principle, which is repudiated only by the enemies of democracy, ought to prevail within the proletarian class-State. Instead, however, we see that in the Soviet system there are more links interposed between the proletarians and the rulers than in any other modern State system. The presidium of the C.E.C. is in reality a filtered and refiltered, and yet

again filtered, outcome of the popular will, so remote from the primary expression of that will that the original electors have really no say whatever in the doings of what is both officially and actually the highest power in the State.

The institution which, in Soviet Russia, is formally denominated the government, namely the Council of People's Commissaries, is, so to say, the technical department of the presidium of the C.E.C. The two authorities work hand in hand, although constitutionally the Council of People's Commissaries is subordinate to the C.E.C. and its presidium. It would be waste of time to try and specify their separate functions here.

## 6. SOVIETS AND THE PARTY

It would be needless to waste many words in analysing the decorative character of the Russian Soviet system were it not that the bolsheviks lay so much stress on the public recognition of the honesty of this system, and devote a great deal of pains to the endeavour to conceal from the foreign world that Red Russia is actually governed by a clique. What is the object of this extraordinarily complicated Soviet form of the dictatorship of the proletariat, if the Bolshevik Party is (as it asserts) the actual possessor of the only genuine recipe for the attainment of socialism? Since November 7, 1917, the day of Lenin's victory, no one either within Russia or without has ever doubted that the country has been ruled exclusively in accordance with the said recipe, exclusively in accordance with the will of Lenin's party. No one, either within Russia or without, has ever doubted that actual power has been in the hands, not of the above-described constitutional organisations, but of an institution of which there is no mention in the constitution, namely the All-Russian Communist Party (of the bolsheviks). No bolshevik has ever seriously denied that in Russia there exists a dictatorship of the Bolshevik Party, the "vanguard of the proletariat". Times with-

out number has bolshevik propaganda announced to the workers of all lands that the Russian bolshevik State is the only valid form of the dictatorship of the proletariat. Why, then, I repeat, should there be this chaste veiling of the party dictatorship in the pseudo-democracy of the proletarian Soviet system? The answer is obvious. The window-dressing of Soviet democracy is designed to make the bolshevik dictatorship and its fruits more palatable to the Russian proletariat, and to hoodwink the workers of other parts of the world into the belief that bolshevik policy is originated by the broad masses of the Russian urban and rural proletariat and has the approval of these. Nonetheless many bolsheviks are personally convinced that the Soviet system is genuinely an admirable one from the point of view of the proletarian dictatorship, and look forward to a future in which a true Soviet government will function without friction and without any need for the extant dictatorship of the Party.

In the year 1928, 93·7 per cent of the adult population of Russia had the right to elect to the soviets. This percentage constituted the full quota of the proletarian class possessing the privileges of Russian citizenship. Only 2 per cent of the electorate are members of the Communist Party. Thus in the Soviet State to be a proletarian is by no means synonymous with being a communist. Ostensibly, however, the proletariat wields the powers of State, and rules through the instrumentality of the soviets. In the table on page 91 we see the numerical relationships between the non-Party (i.e. non-communist) members and the Party members (bolsheviks) in the various soviets of different grades.

The subjoined brief table shows better than would any amount of verbal description how through the filtration effected by the Soviet electoral system the Communist Party is enabled to retain supreme control. The higher the grade of soviet, the larger is the proportion of communist members; and in each grade of the Soviet structure the executive committee contains a considerably larger proportion of Party

members than does the soviet by which it has been elected. The only exception to this rule is formed by the executive committees of the federal republics, in which there are 4 per cent more non-Party members than in the congresses of these same federal republics. There is the same reason for this as for the slackening in the process of bolshevisation seen in the table as we pass beyond the level of the district soviet. There can be no natural or unassisted process to account for the

	Total Membership		Committee Membership	
	Non-Party	Communists	Non-Party	Communists
<b>RURAL SOVIETS</b>				
Village Soviets	86	14	75	25
Volost Soviets	70	30	46	54
Regional Soviets	62	38	44	56
<b>URBAN SOVIETS</b>				
Town Soviets	49	51	—	—
Urban District Soviets <sup>1</sup>	44	56	32	68
Urban Aggregate Soviets <sup>1</sup>	39	61	31	69
<b>SOVIET CONGRESSES</b>				
District Congresses	32	68	27	73
Provincial Congresses	34	66	31	69
Federal Congresses <sup>1</sup>	28	72	32	68
All-Russian Congresses	27	73	1.6	98.4
			(C.E.C.)	

<sup>1</sup> Only for the R.S.F.S.R.

fact that whereas in the district congresses the communists form fully two-thirds of the members, when we pass upward to the provincial soviet we suddenly find that a smaller proportion of Party members has been elected. There cannot be the slightest doubt that in the higher Soviet organisations the wish of the Party is and the instructions of the Party are that a smaller proportion of communists shall be elected—that there shall be more non-Party members in order to save the democratic face of the Soviet system. Moreover, during my four years' study of matters at the source, I have never heard



of a non-Party member of the higher soviets daring to make any serious criticism.

That in this matter we are concerned with the human will and not with "natural causation" is shown most plainly by the sudden falling-off in the proportion of non-Party members as between the executive committees of the federal republics and the C.E.C. Seeing that in the executive committee of the R.S.F.S.R., whose population numbers more than two-thirds of that of the whole Soviet realm, there are 32 per cent of non-Party members, we can see absolutely no reason why in the C.E.C. the proportion of Party members should suddenly have fallen to 1.6 per cent. The actual fact, of course, is that the Party does not dare to give even a trace of formal power to the C.E.C., which is the parliament of the realm. Nevertheless the comedy of Soviet democracy is pushed to such an extreme that the communist members of the soviets and the executive committees continue to speak of themselves as "fractions", and it is certainly rather funny to hear of the 98.4 per cent "communist fraction" of the C.E.C. making proposals. Neither the executive committees of the lower-grade Soviet congresses, nor those of the federal republics, nor yet the C.E.C. of the whole realm, can effectively influence the legislature or the executive, for, as we have already seen, they meet too seldom. The real legislative and executive work is in the hands of the presidia of the executive committees and of the people's commissariats (or, as we should call them in the West, the ministries of State). These presidia are staffed almost exclusively by Party members.

In the higher-grade executive committees and Soviet congresses scarcely one non-Party member is to be found on the presidia. Nor, so far as I know, are there any non-communists among the people's commissaries or among the members of the directing committees of the people's commissariats. Thus the Party occupies all the commanding heights of the Soviet system.

## 7. PARTY CONTROL

I have no statistical data as to how far down in the administrative apparatus this monopolist position of the Party membership extends, and can only judge by everyday experience. In no important office have I ever found a non-Party man or woman as chief. In the case of less important administrative concerns, where the chief is not a member of the Communist Party, there will always be a communist on watch as assistant. Such assistants, in many cases, really know nothing at all about the technique of the administrative department concerned, their sole function being to keep an eye upon the non-Party expert. The same method of control is applied throughout the co-operative system. When the chiefs of the trading co-operatives (purchase or sale) and the building co-operatives (construction or management) are not members of the Party, bolsheviks will always be found acting as "right-hand men". Literally I do not know of a single instance in which a public enterprise or organisation in Russia, if it has not a communist chief, is not kept in this way under communist control.

In addition, there exists a special organisation for the Party control of the soviets and the people's commissariats, a body known as the Central Control Commission, with branches throughout the country. This Party instrument works hand in hand with the People's Commissariat of the Workers' and Peasants' Inspection, whose business it is to supervise the administrative authorities and the entire system of State economics. How closely connected this latter ministry of State is with the Party instrument known as the Central Control Commission is sufficiently indicated by the fact that all the members of the committee and the heads of the various subdivisions of this people's commissariat are simultaneously members of the C.C.C. Besides, the two institutions are apt to be spoken of in the same breath, and members of the Party refer plainly enough to the close connexion between

them. For instance Yaroslavsky, secretary general of the C.C.C., speaking at the Fifteenth Party Congress, said: "The presidium of the C.C.C. must be the organ which will conduct the work of the Central Control Commission and the Workers' and Peasants' Inspection in accordance with the directives of the plenum of the C.C.C." The reader will note how plainly Yaroslavsky declares that the "directives" for the joint work are to come from the C.C.C., which is purely a Party organisation. In Appendix I, I reproduce word for word a document, the working agenda of the supreme Party instrument for the year 1928, which gives the plainest possible evidence of the actual relationships of power in Soviet Russia. In this document, the Party leadership discloses itself as the dominating authority in matters of State. It issues orders, for a whole year in advance, to the various ministries of State (the people's commissariats), to the lower-grade administrative offices, and even to the ministries of the separate federal republics, demanding reports upon their administrative and governmental work. This is no mere matter of form. The Party leadership exercises an effective control. Financial statements, reports, and plans for the future can only be published and submitted to the various parliaments after the Party leadership has examined and approved them. Not until then are the soviets allowed to add a little seasoning of their own in the form of oratory and minor proposals for modifications—and such modifications will still be subject to the decisions of the Party, inasmuch as the higher-grade Soviet congresses are, as we have seen, filled almost exclusively by Party members.

Distrust of everything which is not controlled by Party leading-strings and doubt concerning the sincerity of the widely trumpeted love of the working masses for the bolshevik regime, prevent the Party from pushing the fiction of proletarian democracy so far as to give even a minimum of administrative power to the non-Party masses among the Soviet electors. The bolshevik reply to this criticism will be that all those among the masses who are really efficient and

are genuinely friendly to the Soviet system find their way into the Party. That apologia does not suffice to explain why there should still be 32 per cent of non-Party members in the respective committees of the federal republics, but not a single non-Party member in the presidia of even the small district executive committees! The bolsheviks must make their choice between two explanations. Either their lust for power is too great, or else their confidence in the trustworthiness of the masses of proletarian electors is too small, to allow them to grant these masses even the most modest share in guiding the destinies of the country. Note well, moreover, that when we speak of the soviet electors we are not concerned with the people at large and without qualification, but only with the "class of workers" which is supposed, thanks to the November revolution, to have fought its way to supreme power in the State.

#### 8. SOVIET DEMOCRACY IS WINDOW-DRESSING

The "working class" of Soviet Russia is well aware that it has no power. This is seen in the voting statistics. During the election to the soviets in the winter of 1926-1927, out of fifty-eight millions entitled to vote only twenty-eight millions voted; this is all the more significant seeing that every member of a trade union is compelled to vote. I have already shown how little interest the members of even the higher Soviet organisations display in the comedy of their own proceedings, which they themselves know to be futile.

Soviet democracy is window-dressing. There is no democracy in Soviet Russia. The Party's sway is absolute. The leadership of the Party, a thin stratum, controls the general policy of the realm, and, like the general staff of an army, gives precise directions to all subordinate institutions, seeing to it (by means of a special apparatus) that commands are strictly carried out. The lower strata of the Party membership exercise similar powers at all the inferior levels of executive

work—in the federal republics, the provinces, the towns, and the villages. The soviets are nothing but scene-paintings, and none but the very simple believe them to have any other function than this. Their main object, indeed, nowadays, is to humbug the foreign proletariat. The glamour of the Soviet system will, it is hoped, induce the workers of western lands to follow the Russian example, and then, by handing over the wealth and the means of production of these more highly developed countries to the foreign and the Russian bolsheviks, help the latter out of the ditch into which their political and economic doctrines have brought them.

Dispassionate observation and practical experience show that the relationship between the Party and the soviets is what has been above described. Let me repeat, however, that I am far from wishing to discredit the faith of communist idealists in the excellence of the Soviet system, or from maintaining that this system (which, if honestly worked, would be akin to other democratic popular governments) is *per se* objectionable or impracticable. Nevertheless, what the bolsheviks have actually made of the Soviet idea cannot but be a scorn and a hissing to all true democrats.

## CHAPTER SIX

### THE VISAGE OF THE PARTY

#### 1. NOT A MASS PARTY

THE Russian proletariat and the Russian soviets are in the grip of the Bolshevik Party. Uncontrolled party government exists in other countries as well, for instance in fascist Italy. Let us turn, then, to consider whether, within the Communist Party of Russia, which speaks of itself as the vanguard of the proletariat, there really exists a will to establish democracy, or, if you prefer it, a will to establish socialism or collectivism.

On July 1, 1928, Party statistics showed, in round figures, that there were 1,400,000 members and candidates for membership, this being about 2 per cent of the adult population of the country. The smallness of the percentage is often regarded in foreign lands as a proof that the broad masses are hostile to the Party. The inference is not altogether sound. The main reason why the Party membership is numerically small is that the Party is so rigorously exclusive. I do not think that the bolsheviks would find much difficulty in doubling or tripling the membership of their Party, since a great many non-Party citizens would be glad to secure comparative freedom from poverty and political oppression at the price of having their names written on a Party card. Under existing conditions, however, the bolsheviks cannot become a genuine mass Party, for the reason that their aims and methods are either not understood or not approved by the broad masses of the people. Since, therefore, for an indefinite period the Party must remain no more than one small limb of the huge Russian organism, it is naturally compelled to enrol only those who will march with it through thick and thin.

That remains the bolsheviks' guiding principle except at times when it seems desirable to arrange for a special demonstration of the masses' "confidence" in the Party. For instance, after Lenin's death, which aroused among the anti-bolshevik elements of Russia and the foreign world fresh hopes of the imminent collapse of bolshevism, the Party instituted what was termed the "Lenin levy", by which during the year 1924 the membership of the Party was increased from 472,000 to 772,040. There was a similar extensive increase in the Party effected at the turn of the year 1927-1928, the aim being to show that the masses had confidence, not in the Trotskyists, but in the Stalinists. In connexion with the decennial celebrations of the November revolution, Stalin instituted the "November levy", thanks to which within six months the membership of the Party was increased by about 150,000. Most of those newly enrolled at this time were "workers from the bench", for Trotsky had declared that the percentage of genuine manual workers in the Party was steadily declining. These examples show that the Party has no difficulty in regulating its membership, whether in respect of numbers or of social origin, in accordance with the political needs of the day. In that respect it is sharply distinguished, not only from the ordinary political parties of other lands, but also from the communist parties in non-Russian countries. This may seem surprising at the first glance, since the foreign sections of the Communist International are no more than creatures and tools of the Russian Communist Party; but it must not be forgotten that the tasks of the Russian Communist Party and those of its foreign outposts are very different. The foreign or non-Russian communist parties need as much voting power as possible, a multiplicity of voices and of fists, seeing that they have to win political power. The Russian Communist Party, on the other hand, needs tried and trusted and thoroughly convinced members, persons ready to make sacrifices, seeing that its business is, not to win power, but to hold it.

## 2. NOT A WORKERS' PARTY

Trotsky's contention as to the social composition of the Party brings us up against the question whether this Party (which is not, and owing to the nature of its political tasks cannot possibly be, a mass Party) is at least recruited mainly from the proletariat. Bolshevik statistics give us pointers on this matter, but we may assume that the figures have been touched up in the proletarian direction. On July 1, 1928, amongst the members of the Party 59.3 per cent were of working-class origin, 21.8 per cent were peasants, and 18.9 per cent had other vocational origins. In view of the fact that the Party proclaims itself to be a workers' and peasants' proletarian Party, we cannot but be struck both by the low percentage of peasants among the members and by the comparatively high percentage of members who have neither been peasants nor manual workers, and therefore are not proletarians in the bolshevik sense of the term. Putting "origin" aside, the social composition of the Party becomes still more momentous when we consider the statistics concerning the occupations of the present members of the Party. On January 1, 1928, the percentage of those actually engaged in work on the land as peasants was only 12.3 per cent; the percentage of workers was 40.8; the percentage of officials and employees in the public services was 36.1 per cent; and the remaining 10.8 per cent consisted of students, handicraftsmen, soldiers, and unemployed. According to these figures nearly two-fifths of the Party members make their living directly out of the bolshevik regime; the manual workers (other than peasants) are scarcely more numerous; and the peasants, who are supposed to be, with the workers, the joint rulers of the country, comprise no more than one-eighth of the membership. It must be remembered, moreover, that these numerical ratios are the outcome of a watchword issued by the Fifteenth Party Congress, which had declared that at least 50 per cent of the Party members must be genuine workers. Prior to 1928, from



the proletarian standpoint the composition of the membership was even more unfavourable.

The social composition of the Party shows that no very effective advance has been made in the direction of carrying out the policy of "Get nearer to the masses!" upon which bolshevik propagandists have laid so much stress both in Russia and elsewhere. I cannot believe that in any other dominant party in the world do those who make their living directly out of the Party regime form so large a proportion of the membership as in the Bolshevik Party. Furthermore, the higher we rise in the levels of the Party, the more remote from the masses do we find the membership to be. Whereas in the village nuclei of the Party, the peasants and agricultural workers comprise 46·6 per cent of the membership and the officials and employees only 42·7 per cent, in the next grade of the hierarchy, in the volost committees, we find that among every 100 members there are only 4 working peasants and 10·3 operatives from the bench, as contrasted with 51·5 Party employees and 34·2 other employees and officials. In the district committees of the Party, the proportion of peasants falls to 2·9, whereas the proportion of urban proletarians is naturally larger, reaching 14·1 per cent, that of the employees and officials being 38·5, and that of the Party officials being 44·5. In the provincial committees of the Party, we find the following ratios: workers from the bench, 13·2 per cent; peasants, 1·4 per cent; Party officials, 48·0 per cent; other employees, 37·4 per cent. We must also take into account the fact that we are concerned here with elected Party committees which meet at intervals, and not with Party bureaus, which in other parties in other countries are partly staffed by paid officials. But even the bureaus of the Communist Party are unique in this respect, that they have not one actually working peasant among their staff, and that the industrial workers engaged in handicraft number only about 4·2 per cent, whereas there are 58·9 per cent of leading Party officials, and 26·2 per cent of other persons fed at the expense of the State.

In the great territorial and All-Russian congresses of the Party, the authorities, for propagandist reasons, usually leave a small proportion of the places open to manual workers, just as in the All-Russian Congress of Soviets a certain percentage of non-Party delegates is tolerated for decorative purposes. As far, however, as the Central Committee of the Party is concerned, the Party statistics, which in other respects always distinguish carefully between the social origin and the actual occupation of members, give only the following laconic data: workers, 56·7 per cent; peasants, 0 per cent; employees, 43·3 per cent. From this baldness of expression we are presumably justified in inferring that on the innermost governing body consisting of 104 persons there is not one worker actually engaged at his trade.

### 3. A PARTY OF PROFESSIONAL REVOLUTIONISTS

Very instructive information regarding the character of the Bolshevik Party is further obtainable by classifying the members of the Central Committee according to the length of time they have belonged to the Party. In the year 1928, 98 per cent of the members of the Central Committee were survivors of the "underground" bolsheviks of the days prior to 1917, when the Party was an illegal organisation; 1 per cent consisted of persons who had joined the Party between 1917 and 1920; and 1 per cent consisted of persons who had joined after 1920. The significance of this is that to-day the Party is ruled almost exclusively by the Old Guard of bolsheviks from pre-revolutionary days. In 1917, the Party had 23,600 members, whereas to-day the membership is 1,400,000. Yet this development of the Party from a very small one, little more than a clique, into a huge political organisation has been effected without leaving any trace to speak of on the Party leadership. The old professional revolutionists of 1917 rule the Party now, and therewith rule Russia, just as they did thirteen years ago.

The Bolshevik Party is not a mass party, whether in point of numbers or in respect of social structure. Its supreme authority, the Central Committee, contains no genuine industrial workers, but consists of professional revolutionists nearly all of whom can look back upon a long official career in the Party or in the service of the State. This remarkable clique rules the greatest country in Europe. No one can understand the bolshevik system of government without taking that fact into account, but the way in which Russia is cut off from the outer world makes it difficult for foreigners to appreciate the fact.

#### 4. STRUCTURE

The structure of the Bolshevik Party edifice is closely akin to that of the Soviet apparatus. In the one as in the other, the votes of individual electors and members can only influence the composition of the lower-grade organisations. In the Soviet system, only the village soviets and occupational soviets are directly elected by the primary electors; in the Party, the rank-and-file members elect the bureau of the cell or nucleus, the smallest unit in the Party organisation. The Party members in every village, every factory, every school, every governmental or municipal authority, constitute a communist nucleus. But whereas the lowest grade of soviets select representatives from their own membership to form the soviet belonging to the next grade in the hierarchy, the members of a communist nucleus elect, not only the bureau of the nucleus, but also the committee coming next higher in grade, the district committee in the countryside and the departmental committee in the town. From this stage onwards there is, in the Party, a process of filtration identical with that which goes on in the Soviet electoral system. If we compare the power of the soviets of the various grades with the effective influence of the different Party committees, we find that the latter come even worse off, inasmuch as actual power in the nucleus committees belongs to the bureaus and the secretariats and not to the plena.

I am speaking, here, of power within the soviets and within the Party committees, for of course the actual power of every Party committee is considerably greater than the power of every soviet authority of the same grade.

What has already been said concerning the ineffectiveness of the All-Russian Congress of Soviets will have prepared the reader to realise that the Congress of the All-Russian Communist Party, which meets every year or once in two years and constitutes, formally speaking, the governing body of the Party, cannot really exercise any influence upon the destinies of the latter. The chief function of the congress is to elect the Central Committee and the Central Control Commission—the “condensed Party Parliament”, to use the image employed in speaking of the Soviet system. Just as to the Soviet congress, so to the Party congress there is submitted by one of its committees a ready-made list of candidates, and I have never heard of an instance in which the congress has made any change in one of these lists. No doubt the Party congress is not always quite so peaceful as the Soviet congress. Although the actual governing authorities of the Party have usually been careful to safeguard matters beforehand by a process of “cooking”, it is sometimes thought expedient to have contentious questions rediscussed and redigested by the assembled delegates. There is no serious danger in this, and it makes a good impression abroad, suggesting that Party affairs are democratically conducted.

The condensed Party parliament, which, like the Central Executive Committee of the Soviets, sits twice or thrice a year, consists of the Central Committee and the Central Control Commission jointly. The membership of the c.c. has grown proportionally with the growth in the membership of the Party at large. At the date of the Fifteenth Party Congress there were 71 members, plus 50 candidates. The c.c.c. had 195 members. Mostly the two authorities hold separate sittings, but questions of primary importance are discussed by them jointly in what is called the plenum. Now what is the real

political power of the condensed Party parliament? There have been a few instances in the history of the Bolshevik Party in which, at the sittings of the plenum, there were vigorous disputes as to policy—disputes whose issue for a time seemed dubious. This has always happened when, in the interval between two Party congresses, some oppositional group within the Party has been able to gain a secure footing in the c.c. and the c.c.c. In such cases the victorious majority has invariably, after the next Party congress, effected a “purge” of the condensed parliament. The bravura tone on such occasions may be gathered from the fact that, after the victory over the Trotsky-Zinovieff opposition in December 1927, the re-elected Central Committee contained 19 new members and the Central Control Committee 110 new members—whereas in ordinary times the Party avoids making extensive changes in the personnel of these supreme authorities.

#### 5. THE POLITICAL BUREAU AND THE SECRETARIAT

But the condensed parliament does not meet often enough to guide the destinies of the Party effectively. The real Party government (analogous to the presidium of the condensed Soviet parliament) is, first of all, the Political Bureau, a group of nine persons elected by the plenum of the c.c. and the c.c.c., and, in the second place, the General Secretariat, which is even more powerful than the Political Bureau, and controls the entire technical apparatus of the Party. Originally there were three secretaries, co-equal in authority, as leaders of the secretariat; but while Lenin was still alive the post of a one and only secretary general was created (*de facto*, not *de jure*) and was entrusted to Stalin. During the two years that elapsed between Lenin's first paralytic stroke and his death, Stalin, an ambitious man with clearly defined aims, was quietly concentrating his position and getting more and more power into his hands, without ostensibly interfering with what

seemed to be the growing authority of Kameneff. During the period of transient improvement in health, Lenin came to realise that in Stalin a man dangerous to the Party was coming to the front; and in the document spoken of as his "testament" (whose authenticity has been admitted even by such shield-bearers of Stalin as Yaroslavsky) he warned the Party against retaining Stalin as secretary general, on the ground that the latter lacked the qualities desirable in the holder of that post. It would seem that Kameneff and his friend Zinovieff underestimated too long the danger with which they were being threatened by Stalin's predominance. At any rate Stalin was able to lull Kameneff into security as long as he thought it desirable. During Lenin's closing days there had become manifest in the sittings of the C.C. and of the Thirteenth Party Congress the predominant influence of what was spoken of as the Troika, consisting of Kameneff, Zinovieff, and Stalin, who were, for a time, the ruling triumvirate.

Students of political life, not only in Russia but elsewhere, know well enough that leading officials can do a great deal to guide the footsteps of a political party. This lies in the nature of the case, and no exception can be taken on that ground to the predominant position of the Political Bureau and the General Secretariat in the Russian Communist Party or even to the remarkable powers wielded by the before-mentioned triumvirate. On the contrary, there are good reasons for holding that personal government of the kind is better than the following of a policy dictated merely by dogmatic routine. But if personal, quasi-autocratic government is to be tolerable, there must be continuous and active control exercised by the rank and file and by their elected representatives. In free countries, parties are automatically thus controlled, for the members simply quit the Party when they are not satisfied with its leadership. In Soviet Russia, however, where the Bolshevik Party has a water-tight monopoly of political organisation, no such automatic regulator can function.

## CHAPTER SEVEN

### THE BOLSHEVIKS AT HOME

#### 1. MOVEMENT OR STAGNATION?

WITH a sound recognition of how peculiar in this respect is the position of the Bolshevik Party, a good while ago some progressive communists began to demand democracy within the Party, to insist upon a right to the free expression of opinion within the bolshevik ranks, upon the right to form "fractions". The great majority of the bolsheviks, however, Lenin included, had always been strongly opposed to anything of the kind, declaring that only through the most rigid discipline, only as a "monolith", a body hard and compact as stone, could the Party hold sway over the great non-Party masses of the people. No doubt strong considerations could be adduced on behalf of this standpoint, just as strong considerations could be adduced for that of the advocates of "democracy", who dreaded the ossification and decay of Party life if the principle of blind obedience were adhered to. The history of the Russian Communist Party, and in particular the history of the opposition movement among the bolsheviks, has been that of a struggle between these two natural trends. A cleavage of the kind is the necessary outcome of every dictatorship, and has in the long run laid low every dictatorship which had passed into the hands of persons lacking exceptional ability ("diadochi", as the Greeks termed the successors of Alexander). The jealousies and struggles of the "successors" are the outcome of that cancer in the bolshevik corporation which has resulted from the insistence upon blind obedience. Here, however, we are not concerned with the fate of the Bolshevik Party and its leaders. If we find it expedient to discuss the historical processes at work in the ruling class of the Reds, this is because we want to understand

the spirit which has brought Russia to its present situation and will determine that situation in the future, a spirit which likewise exerts a great influence in the environing world. Especially significant, in this connexion, was the struggle between Stalin and Trotsky during the years 1924 to 1929, for amid the passions of the fight the leading bolsheviks tore from one another's faces the masks which they usually wear in the presence of the outer world.

As already indicated, the struggles among the bolsheviks are the expression of an obvious law of motion, which may be formulated as follows. The bolshevik order is continually bringing fresh economic and social difficulties in its train—because it is still young and inchoate, say the bolsheviks; because it is utopian, doctrinaire, and out of touch with life, declare outside critics. The unceasing struggle with ever-renewed difficulties makes the leaders of the Party irritable, makes them suspicious of every one and everything, even of their closest comrades. Those who are afraid that the rickety cart is being driven into a bog demand a say in the matter, demand discussion and democracy within the Party. The others rejoin that democracy in existing circumstances would be regarded by external enemies as a sign of weakness, with the result that anti-Soviet fungi would settle down in every crevice of the Party structure and begin to grow there. As far as this dynamic is concerned, there is nothing unnatural or unhealthy in the oppositional movement within the Russian Communist Party. Like phenomena have occurred in the past and can be observed to-day in the political parties of all countries.

What is peculiar to contemporary Russia, what is almost incomprehensible to the non-Russian world, is the way in which the struggle among the bolsheviks is carried on, alike in respect of substance and of form.



## 2. A NEW LANGUAGE

Let us study bolshevik rhetoric, which plays a leading political role in the Soviet State. At the outset of my stay in Soviet Russia, I was struck by the fact that there was a vast difference between the language of bolshevik orators and newspapers and the language I had learned from Russian grammars and from the reading of Russian authors—a difference which, at first, made the bolshevik tongue almost incomprehensible to me. To-day, after one of my main occupations for several years has been to read bolshevik newspapers while in the pressure of work I have had little opportunity of reading books written in good Russian, the position has changed, so that I find what may be called “classical” Russian hard to understand! Persons who have a really scholarly knowledge of the Russian tongue explained this remarkable phenomenon in the following way. The bolsheviks, with their passion for innovation, have “proletarianised” their native speech to an amazing extent—have, in fact, made a horrible botch of it, for I do not consider that the grotesque peppering of the Red speech with foreign words contributes to make Russian more generally comprehensible. The bolsheviks have, however, retained the prolixity which has always been characteristic of Russian literary and oratorical expression—a prolixity which fatigues our ears and irritates our nerves. To the foreigner, the best speeches and the most readable essays are those of the bolshevik politicians who are neither of Great Russian nor of Jewish descent, as for instance those of Stalin, a Caucasian, and the late Dzerzhinsky, who was a Pole.

## 3. DOGMAS

The Red dialectic is likewise an amalgam of Russian and foreign elements. The bolshevik leader writer and orator is under the stress of two conflicting impulses. On the one hand he inclines, in typical Russian fashion, to fortify his

exposition by endless reiteration and thus to hammer in his theses; but, on the other hand, he is keen on producing the impression that he has mastered all the sobriety of European thought. Neither must we forget, nor can we overestimate, the concrete influence which Marxian socialism, the doctrines and arguments of Marx and Engels, have had upon the bolshevik mentality. But the Marxism of the West is materialistic and matter of fact, whereas Russian thought is fanciful, non-rational, and playful. The confluence of two such antagonistic elements goes far to explain the unwholesomeness, the impracticability, of the bolshevik mentality. A hundred times in the assembly halls of Soviet Russia I have renewed the impression that the persons to whom I was listening were not human beings of flesh and blood like myself, but mere talking machines whose internal mechanism must be out of gear. However logical their speeches may sometimes sound, however charged with emotion (though the emotion has been worn rather thin through a dozen years of everyday use), bolshevik rhetoric always seems devoid of genuine warmth and trustworthy intuition.

#### 4. RED PHARISAISM

So long as it is only a question of supplying daily requirements in the way of influence and persuasion, the Red rhetoric of Russian Marxists is equal to the task, all the more seeing that the other political instruments in everyday use are sufficient unaided to maintain a "proper frame of mind". But in the struggles within the Party, Red rhetoric proves a broken reed, for those on the other side can play the same lute quite as well. Here we reach a second flaw in the bolshevik system. Those among the communist leaders who are fighting for freedom within the Party, for "internal bolshevik democracy",<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Nearly all the bolshevik leaders have at one time or another been in opposition to the majority, and, as far as theory goes, they all without exception recognise the justification for some sort of "proletarian" or "bolshevik" democracy.

defend their views and demands, not primarily by practical experience or in relation to the actual political or economic situation, but exclusively by a dogma; sometimes an utterance of Lenin's or of Marx', sometimes one of the resolutions passed at a Party congress. One who enters a room where the voluminous reports of the various congresses and of the sittings of the Central Committee line the walls, and who then takes down some of the volumes and flutters the pages, derives the impression that he is reading, not the history of a Party that rules one of the greatest countries in the world, but the minutes of a congress of scribes, of sophists; the reports of a council of Pharisees. The record is everywhere interspersed with quotations from the fifth, the eleventh, the twenty-seventh volume of Lenin's works, paragraph 5, sentence 3; it breathes curses upon the sinners who shall venture a contrary interpretation to that embodied in the forty-third resolution of the Fifteenth Party Congress. No doubt Stalin and Trotsky, Yaroslavsky and Buharin, and the rest of them, batter one another with hard facts, such as the underpaying and underfeeding of the workers; but they do not thereupon proceed to consider whether these troubles can best be relieved by the import or by the levying of grain, matters likewise within the realm of hard fact: instead, they go on to discuss whether "if Lenin's line had been rightly followed" the troubles would ever have arisen; what these troubles mean in the light of the resolution of the Thirteenth Party Conference; whether the difficulties in question be truly morbid manifestations, or only a healthy expression of the processes of growth. These people who claim to have discovered and would fain patent the proletarian State, consider it far more important to determine whether Comrade X by expressing this or that view is showing himself to be an opportunist, whether Comrade Y is manifesting signs of a "deviation to the right", or whether Comrade Z has "infringed the Party ethics by entering into an alliance with alien elements"—than to deal by concrete methods with the concrete facts of the

situation. Only in the history of the heresies of the early days of Christianity can we find a historical analogy for the pharisaical methods of controversy and conflict which are in habitual use among the leading bolsheviks. I do not think that anything short of an example will make the non-Russian reader who is unfamiliar with these matters understand.

As a crucial instance of the mentality in question, I shall adduce some of the documents of the Fifteenth Party Congress held at the time when the struggle between Trotsky and Stalin reached its climax. The congress took place in December 1927. Stalin's aim at this juncture was to make the leaders of the Trotskyist opposition choose between capitulation or expulsion from the Party. The members of the opposition, being at bay, were no longer fighting for victory, but only for a form of capitulation which would to some extent save their faces before the Party and the country.

Appendix 2 contains the resolution unanimously adopted by the Fifteenth Party Congress. One who reads it cannot but believe that the members of the opposition must have been double-dyed traitors. In reality Trotsky, Kameneff, Zinovieff, Radek, Rakovsky, Smilga, Lashevich, and the rest (all of them heroes of the revolution and among the founders of bolshevism), had merely asked for a chance of publicly expounding their views, which to us of Europe seem to differ only in minor shades from the views of the Stalinist bolsheviks. They had, indeed, "taken French leave". After all the powers of police repression had been used to muzzle them they had issued a few leaflets printed by "underground" presses and some of their adherents had made a few demonstrations during the decennial festivities in November 1927. A further offence was that they had been exchanging letters with certain fallen communist idols in foreign parts, for they wished to make their views known to the members of the aberrant offshoots of the Communist International in the West. These were grievous sins in Soviet Russia, though they would not have been considered grievous except in a land entirely devoid of

political freedom—sins for which Stalin and his associates demanded atonement.

The opposition made various attempts to plead mitigating circumstances. Its first step was to send to the Congress a long-winded memorandum (Appendix III) signed by 121 of its leaders, with Trotsky, Zinovieff, and Kameneff at the head. This document for the defence is characterised by an extraordinary degree of subjection to Stalin's will. When we remember how intense had been the bitterness shown in the previous discussion and that the most distinguished opposition leaders had already been deprived of political power, we cannot but be surprised that Stalin and "his central committee" were not satisfied with such submission. Certainly in any other foreign land of modern times such a measure of self-humiliation would have been regarded as extraordinary and would have induced the leaders of the Party in which it had happened to yield something on their side, if only to escape being stigmatised as tyrants. But the congress of the "vanguard of the world proletariat" held other views. It bluntly rejected the explanation of "the genuine soldiers of the bolshevik-proletarian army", as the Trotskyists had termed themselves, and insisted upon its demands for an "ideological disarmament".

Faced by Stalin's unyielding attitude, the opposition broke up once more into the two groups out of which it had been formed a year earlier in the attempt to overthrow the Stalinist dictatorship. It was severed into the Kameneff-Zinovieff group and the Trotsky-Radek group. Each of these groups then sent a fresh declaration to Ordshonikidse, the Caucasian who acted as Stalin's shield-bearer, and who, as chairman of the committee which the Congress had appointed to deal with the question of the opposition, held the fate of the dissentients in his hands. The Kameneff-Zinovieff group now made unconditional surrender (see Appendix IV); but the Trotsky-Radek group, in its new letter to Ordshonikidse reiterated its conviction that it was entitled to expound to the Party such

views as it regarded as sound. The Congress, however, rejected both declarations, pointing out that even the Kameneff-Zinovieff group had not really complied to the full, inasmuch as it still stood out against "ideal disarmament". Ordshonikidse's committee then demanded from the Congress the expulsion of all the leading members of the opposition groups. The Congress decided accordingly, and Stalin publicly announced his triumph in the phrases of the Congress resolution, which are a very striking example of bolshevik jargon.

Recent history gives no parallel to inquisitorial work of this kind in the political field. Not even under the fascist regime in Italy, which has many traits in common with those of the bolshevik dictatorship, has despotism been cloaked so pharisaically. Nor, indeed, have the *Italian* politicians and parties tyrannised over by the fascists shown anything like the servility which the majority of the members of the bolshevik opposition showed after Stalin's victory.

Only Trotsky and a small group of his immediate followers stuck manfully to their guns, for whereas Trotsky maintained a dignified silence even after the Congress had rejected the "document of the 121", his friends Radek, Rakovsky (who had until then been Soviet envoy in Paris), Smilga, and Muraloff put their views before the Congress plainly once more in a letter dated December 18, 1927 (see Appendix V). Of the same date is an additional letter from the Kameneff-Zinovieff group, whose members had likewise been expelled from the Party—a letter which was the beginning of a series of repulsive self-accusations and eatings of humble-pie (see Appendix VI).

##### 5. DISMISSAL, ARREST, BANISHMENT

The foregoing account of the proceedings at the Fifteenth Congress will have disclosed the peculiar character of the Bolshevik Party. Now let us turn to consider the practical

methods used by the Party leaders when they are dealing with their opponents in the bolshevik ranks. For every bolshevik, sins against the Party are sins against the Soviet State. Any communist who becomes a member of an opposition group within the Party is regarded as a dangerous and noxious element, not only to the Party, but to the State. While Lenin was still alive it had become the custom to paralyse refractory comrades by simply dismissing them from their official posts. Stalin stood by this tradition. As soon as the Central Committee had verified Trotsky's "ideal revolt against the principles of Leninism", he was deprived of his position as war commissary and chairman of the Revolutionary War Council—the position in which, the founder and organiser of the Red Army, he had done yeoman's service to bolshevism. His dismissal took place in the year 1925, long before Trotsky's opposition tactics had assumed a "fractional character," with reason for sending him out into the cold was plain enough. Other bolshevik leaders were afraid that Trotsky, with his revolutionary prestige in bolshevik circles in the army and navy was outstanding, might organise a bonapartist coup d'état. For the same reason, Kameneff and Zinovieff, who had disapproved of Trotsky's dismissal, were eighteen months later deprived by Stalin of their respective posts as chairmen of the Moscow and Leningrad Soviets—which gave them direct influence upon the urban workers in the two chief cities of the realm. Such dragooning of members of the opposition is effected by simple decree, the action taken and the official reason for it being publicly announced in the press.

To the same category belong deportation and banishment in their various forms. There are three of these: the penal transfer of an official; banishment; and deportation proper.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> I use the term "deportation", following the Russian usage, for what we usually speak of as "banishment" or "exile", namely compulsory removal to a particular place. When a Russian speaks of "banishment" he means a prohibition against living in a particular place or places.

Trotsky, to confine ourselves to the treatment of the most famous of the opposition leaders, has had personal experience of all these. Twice, for a long time, nominally "for the benefit of his health", he was sent to the Caucasus, under orders to live in a particular place where he was kept under police supervision. By way of penal transfer, he was given an unimportant post in the official service. Now, after a term of administrative exile, he has been expelled from Russia. Penal transfers and compulsory "cures" are the milder forms of administrative dragooning. But when we come to deportation we reach one of the most crying evils of bolshevik Party life, the measure used by the ruling oligarchy to cope with "ideal revolt".

During the most critical weeks in the great struggle of the year 1927, the Russian prisons were packed with arrested bolsheviks. Such men as Beloborodoff, people's commissary for home affairs, who, as one of those mainly responsible for the shooting of the tsar and his family, had certainly a claim on bolshevik gratitude, went this winter straight from his ministerial chair to the notorious prison of the Ogpu. But since the Ogpu is disinclined to make its doings public, and since from reading the debates at Party meetings can we form any idea of the extent to which police pressure was exerted on members of the opposition.

At the plenum of the Central Committee and the Central Control Commission in October 1927, the following dispute occurred:

Buharin: "Let me repeat that what I am talking about here is the way in which the opposition has transgressed the limits of Soviet legality, and from this point of view we must study all that Menshinsky<sup>1</sup> has said about the matter. Who gave Preobrazhensky, Serebryakoff, and Sharoff the right to put forward such a demand as that for the immediate liberation of all those who have been placed under arrest, including persons who are not members of the Party?"

<sup>1</sup> President of the Ogpu, as successor to Dzerzhinsky.



Cries from both sections of the opposition, above all from that led by Trotsky, thereupon demanded the liberation of those comrades who had been arrested by the Ogpu for participating in the work of an illegal printing press. Evading this question, Buharin asked Trotsky whether he demanded the liberation of Shcherbakoff, who had been imprisoned, not only for participation in the illegal printing enterprises of the opposition, but also for entering into relationship with sometime White officers. Trotsky replied with considerable heat that of course Shcherbakoff ought to be shot if the latter accusation was true, but went on to say: "You got up the case against Comrade Shcherbakoff with the help of an agent of the Ogpu, the so-called Wrangel-officer! You humbugged the Party for several weeks!"

I shall have to reconsider the matter of the provocative agents and the spies of the Ogpu. At this stage it will be interesting to note the fact, as disclosed by the discussion in the Party parliament, that spies and provocative agents of the Ogpu are used to incriminate members of the Party as well as others.

Buharin, who at this juncture was still faithful to Stalin, <sup>and</sup> he would return to the question of the Wrangel-officer <sup>here-</sup> upon Trotsky shouted: "You used this man to spy <sup>th</sup> upon communists and upon Whites!"

In the further course of the debate, Buharin <sup>said</sup> "It remains for me to deal with the formidable argument that we learned all this through the instrumentality of an agent of the Ogpu. What is the Ogpu for, unless to unmask these counter-revolutionists?"

Bakayeff (one of the opposition leaders): "The Ogpu exists to provide a livelihood for Yaroslavsky."

The report in "Pravda", from which I have compiled my account of the discussion (which, of course, was not open to the public), declares with regard to all the most interesting interruptions on the part of the opposition that these were quite incomprehensible.

Buharin: "You, Comrades, have already gone so far astray that your position compels you to discredit the work of the Ogpu, which brings these matters into the limelight. . . . An agent of the Ogpu discovered that there was some one working in your printing office and simultaneously entering into relations with the Whites. All honour to the Ogpu for doing this!"

What was really at stake in the matter of the Wrangel-officer has never transpired, and is not known to-day to the rank and file of the bolsheviks, for neither Menshinsky's communications nor Trotsky's speech at the October plenum were allowed to be published in the Soviet press. In a work published in Germany in 1928 (*Die wirkliche Lage in Russland*, Avalun-Verlag, pp. 7-8), Trotsky wrote: "My proposal that an immediate inquiry should be made into this matter of the Wrangel-officer and the military conspiracy was voted down. Above all I raised the question how and by whom the Party had been deceived when it was informed that the communists identified with the opposition had participated in a counter-revolutionary organisation. To give yet another instance of what they mean by 'discussion', I may mention that they decided to cut my brief speech concerning the mysterious Wrangel-officer out of the report—this meaning that what I said was to be hidden from the Party at large. On the basis of these documents of the Ogpu (documents which have no bearing either upon the confiscated printing press or upon the opposition), Buharin has decked us out in the fancy picture of a Thermidorian conspiracy. What we want, however, is not Buharin's fancies, but actual facts. Well, there are no facts. The dragging of this question into the discussion about the opposition was an artifice. Their ruthlessness and their dishonesty reached the level of criminal treachery. All the documents read by Menshinsky give unambiguous evidence of the erroneousness of the present political tread—it suffices merely to subject them to a Marxian analysis. But I have no time for this. I can only insist upon the essential question:

How and why does the group now dominant regard it as necessary to deceive the Party by describing an agent of the Ogpu as one of Wrangel's officers; and why did they wrest these fragments of an uncompleted investigation out of their context in order to make the Party uneasy by giving the false impression that members of the opposition were in touch with a counter-revolutionary organisation? What was the object of all this? Whither will it lead? Only that question has political importance. The other matters are subsidiary—in the second rank or in the tenth.”

“Pravda” (an official publication), in its issue of November 1927, reporting Trotsky's speech, has only the following sentence regarding the arrest of members of the opposition: “In the innermost prison of the Ogpu the Stalin-Buharin fraction is keeping under duress such excellent Party members as Nechaeff, Stuckgold, Vasileff, Shmitt, Fischeleff, and many others.” All the rest of the speech was suppressed.

In the course of the long speech he made in answer to the grave accusations of the opposition, Stalin said cynically: “They speak of a sometime officer of Wrangel's, whom the Ogpu is supposed to have employed for the discovery of counter-revolutionary organisations. The opposition comes back to this matter again and again, and is furious that a sometime officer of Wrangel's, to whom persons allied to the opposition addressed themselves, should have proved to be an agent of the Ogpu. What reason is there for complaint if a sometime officer of Wrangel's should now help the Soviet authorities to discover counter-revolutionary conspiracies?” Thus did Stalin himself admit that the mysterious Wrangel-officer had been a spy.

## 6. MUZZLING

Before we turn to consider the deportation of Party members as the extreme measure taken so far for the suppression of freedom within the Party (I write “the extreme measure”, for

there is no satisfactory evidence of the shooting of members of the opposition), I must say a few words to account for the intense embitterment of the opposition. What infuriated such veteran bolsheviks as Trotsky, Zinovieff, and Kameneff was not so much their dismissal from office in the Party and in the State as the fact that they were systematically and increasingly deprived of the possibility of expressing their views, not only to the country at large, but even to the Party. The foregoing extract from the report of the Fifteenth Congress has clearly shown the length to which the muzzling system was pushed. A few words may be said about its development.

Already in 1924, Trotsky's name began to appear less frequently in political leading articles of the Soviet press. In 1925 a silence about his friends begins to be observable, while the names of Zinovieff and the latter's supporters likewise become infrequent. The Soviet newspapers, which are subjected to an extremely rigid censorship, had to close their columns more and more to many of the ablest journalists in Russia. For a time, indeed, the members of the opposition were allowed to publish articles dealing with matters of economic fact, so long as politics were kept out of the picture; but in the year 1927, the old and distinguished names seemed to have disappeared completely from Soviet periodical literature. Even before the Fourteenth Party Congress, in the autumn of 1925, Zinovieff's supporters were unsuccessful in their endeavours to have contentious questions publicly discussed. When the principal newspaper published in the second capital of the realm, the "Leningrad Pravda", ventured to defend Zinovieff's and Kameneff's views, its editorial staff was dismissed, and Stepanoff-Skvortsoff, editor-in-chief of the Moscow journal "Izvestia", was made editor-in-chief of the "Leningrad Pravda" as well. In the year 1926, Ossovsky, a member of the opposition, was expelled from the Party because he had sent to the official political monthly the "Bolshevik" an article which—though it was never published—was held by the Party

leaders to show that he had "foundered in the bourgeois democracy".

It was this unscrupulous use of the censorship against the opposition, at long last, to issue from underground in Moscow and one of the suburbs their "platform theses", and subsequently, in the autumn of 1927 leaflets. This modest attempt to utter their views was raised as a heinous offence against the State; and, when at a hand printing press had been secured, the use of the founts from one of the State printing presses was stigmatised as theft.

At the plenum in October 1927, Zinovieff described the muzzling system and its consequences as follows: "For two years we have been forbidden to speak to the Party. Has that been to the Party's advantage? No. Throughout these two years the Party has been in a ferment. Not only the opposition, but the Party as a whole, has suffered from the measures in question. Now you want to go on doing the same thing for another two years. The only possible result can be to intensify the differences of opinion, and, if I may use the expression, to carry them into the street, among the masses. They have begun to trickle through from the Party into the masses, into the broad working masses of the country. The Party will continue to be in a ferment, and the greatest possible harm will be done. Your present ways of campaigning arise from this source, from your fundamentally erroneous policy at home and abroad. I can very well understand that Stalin, having taken a radically false class line, is compelled to adopt extraordinary measures, to take refuge in establishing a state of siege. Well, less able governments than his taught us long since how to rule with the aid of a state of siege. Stalin finds it necessary to have recourse to harsher and ever harsher measures, which are utterly distasteful to the Party. Think of the story of the 'military conspiracy' and that of

the 'sometime Wrangel-officer'. You don't like me to mention these things here? But it is a fact that Stalin had recourse to them. There has been a lot of talk here about 'illegal printing presses', about 'fractional work' and the like. But a bolshevik must ask himself what has been the cause of all this. Is it, perhaps, the outcome of the fact that certain persons have an intolerable character?<sup>1</sup> Just look into the matter and find out what was printed by these presses. Why, for instance, did Lenin's Testament become an illegal document? I happen to have seen some of the OGPU reports concerning communists under suspicion. In almost every case Lenin's Testament was among the 'exhibits' seized. Is not this a sufficiently characteristic fact?"

Two months later, Zinovieff's courage, so finely displayed in the foregoing speech, had evaporated, as is obvious to any reader of Appendix 6, the declaration in which the Kameneff-Zinovieff group ate humble pie. Nor must we forget that two years earlier this same Zinovieff, who in October 1927 is splintering a lance on behalf of freedom of thought and speech within the Bolshevik Party, had, in conjunction with his friend Kameneff, championed the muzzling of Trotsky. At that time both Zinovieff and Kameneff had demanded the expulsion of Trotsky from the Political Bureau and had been as captious as any one in the discovery of Trotskyist crimes such as "ideal revolt", "breach of class discipline", "revision of bolshevism", etc. In 1925 they had been as pharisaical towards their revolutionary comrade of the old days as in 1927 Stalin was towards themselves. Even to-day, in exile, Trotsky himself is far from advocating genuine freedom within the Party, to say nothing of a general freedom of speech and of the press. His articles penned in Constantinople and published in German newspapers show this clearly enough. In a word, the bolsheviks of the opposition are no whit more "democratic" than Stalin and the other members

of the Stalinist oligarchy. If the opposition could win to power to-morrow, it would promptly retaliate on Stalin in kind.

## 7. SIBERIA ONCE MORE

The history of the deportation of the opposition leaders will round off the picture of the fighting methods used within the Bolshevik Party. From the day when the veterans had as expelled, the title "comrade" was no longer prefixed to names in the bolshevik press; Trotsky, Kameneff, and Zinovieff had become ordinary "Citizen" So-and-so. This may seem a trifling detail, but in reality it is profoundly significant. A non-communist in Soviet Russia is a citizen whose rights are on a lower grade than those of a member of the Party. Political activity in the case of a non-communist, except in so far as it is controlled and directed by communists in the Soviet and governmental enterprises, is a sort of high treason. Since, however, the leaders of the opposition, after their expulsion from the Party, continued to engage in political activities, held assemblies, and kept their illegal organisation in being, it was inevitable (for bolsheviks) that police measures should be taken against them. As far as prison was concerned, this was reserved for the lesser idols among those who could be charged with anti-Soviet activities. Neither Stalin himself, nor his grand inquisitor Yaroslavsky, nor his sheriff's officer Menshinsky ventured to deal with the "big guns" in that way. For the opposition leaders and for most of the small fry as well, the favourite tsarist method of dealing with political offenders would suffice—deportation to Siberia or, as it was called in the old days, "administrative exile".

On January 18, 1928, the following notice appeared in small type in out-of-the-way corners of Soviet journals:

REPORT OF THE TELEGRAPH AGENCIES OF THE  
SOVIET UNION

"The governmental authorities of the Soviet Union have proved that a number of persons who were expelled from the Party at the Fifteenth Congress belong to opposition groups of the Trotskyists and that immediately after the Congress and after the break-up of the opposition block they developed an illegal, anti-Soviet activity, which took the form of attempts to form an underground organisation and to initiate a number of anti-Soviet activities, and also to get into close touch with representatives of the foreign bourgeoisie living in Moscow, with whose aid some of the Trotskyists sent their 'materials' and maliciously false reports to foreign lands and entered into communication with their partisans in foreign parts. In view of the proof that the Trotskyists and the Sapronovists<sup>1</sup> were engaged in illegal, criminal, anti-Soviet activities, it has been considered necessary, as a minimum measure for safeguarding the interests of the proletarian realm, to deport from Moscow thirty of the active participators in these 'groups', and among them Trotsky, I. N. Smirnoff, Serebryakoff, Radek, N. I. Muraloff, Beloborodoff, Sapronoff, W. M. Smirnoff, Harechko, Smilga, Vardin, Safaroff, Sognovsky, and others. Various other persons (Rakovsky, Boguslavsky, Drobnis, etc.) have been ordered to quit Moscow. As regards Zinovieff, Kameneff, and others who have quitted the opposition block, these, so far as we know, have, in view of their declaration of submission to all the resolutions and conditions of the Fifteenth Congress of the Party, been sent by the Party authorities to work in the provinces. Moscow, January 18, 1928."

Except for this brief newspaper item, Russia has never learned anything authentic about the deportation of the great bolshevik revolutionists who formed the leaders of the Trotskyist group. Under conditions which forbade the Russian public to take any serious notice of the matter, these men



returned to the exile from which they had emerged ten years earlier as victors, after breaking the chains of tsarism: Trotsky, sometime war commissary and generalissimo, I. N. Smirnov, the minister for posts and telegraphs, Radek, the organiser of the German revolution, Beloborodoff, commissary for home affairs and the man who had the tsar executed, Rakovsky, the envoy, and many others who belonged to the general staff of the Red revolution and had for a decade been numbered among the leaders of the Soviet realm. Forcibly entrained by the agents of the Ogpu, they had now to travel the road to Siberia which hundreds of thousands of the victims of tsarism and bolshevik tyranny had travelled before them. A typical Russian destiny.

#### 8. A SATIRE

Behind them, in the capital, satire followed upon the heels of tragedy. Without kicking against the pricks, Zinovieff, Kameneff, and Co., who by signing the document of December 18th had abased themselves before Stalin, obeyed orders to betake themselves to out-of-the-way places in the provinces such as Pensa and Tula, and to occupy themselves there as subordinates. While the Party leaders, who could now be ruthless without risk, continued to deal out hard measures to hundreds of the lesser lights of the opposition, expelling them from the Party, depriving them of subsistence, and committing them to prison, the members of the Zinovieff-Kameneff group (and the deported Trotskyists as well; only a few to begin with, but in the long run nearly all) began to crawl back to the foot of the cross, to make written acknowledgment of their "errors", and to pray for fine weather. We must not judge the deportees too harshly, for, on their allowances of thirty roubles a month they would have starved but for the aid of friends. Radek, for instance, was a whole year at Tomsk, seriously ill and almost penniless; then he, too, made his

tance". Only a week after the publication of the decree of deportation, "Pravda" published a long letter from Zinovieff and Kameneff. Filling eight columns, it protested the signatories' devotion to the Party, their resolve to abide by its decision. Touching up and amplifying the formula of subjection, the writers marshalled the points which had separated them and continued to separate them from the Trotskyists. If they had said these things a month earlier, at the Congress, they would have been of more help to Stalin in his duel with Trotsky than Yaroslavsky and Buharin and the provocative agents of the Ogpu. This memorable letter ends with an appeal to the opposition to repudiate Trotsky's guidance and to return to "the Party discipline which alone can bring salvation". Hundreds of members of the opposition hastened to follow this example. For weeks the Soviet press teemed with avowals of penitence, many of those who thus capitulated being shameless enough to betray to the Ogpu and to the ruling clique in the Party those who had sinned with them. It is easy to understand how demoralising these cowardly avowals and acts of treachery, made widely known as they were by the newspapers, must have been to the rank and file of the Party. The repentant sinners were rewarded by permission to pay visits to Moscow, so that by the spring of 1928 the faces of Zinovieff and Kameneff were again to be seen in the streets of the capital. But Trotsky and those who remained steadfast were, for practical purposes, buried alive. During the year which elapsed between the day of deportation and the expulsion of Trotsky from Russia, the Russian press published only one item concerning Trotsky's fate—an account extremely characteristic of the spirit of the Party:

"Verny,<sup>1</sup> February 12, 1928. Trotsky, accompanied by his family, arrived at the station in a special carriage of the second class. The public was surprised at the amount of his baggage (seventy trunks) and at the luxury in which he was travelling.

<sup>1</sup> The place on the Turkestan-Mongolian frontier to which Trotsky

His sporting dogs and his shooting equipment attracted especial attention. 'What distinguished gentleman can this be?' asked people at the station."

Such were the paltry methods by which the authorities attempted to discredit the overthrown demigod in the eyes of the proletarian reading public.

After a six months' probation had been imposed upon the repentant members of the opposition, the Party leaders began to fill up the gaps in the ranks of the old bolsheviks, which had been depleted by the events of the previous winter. On June 29, 1928, the newspapers published the following decree of the C.C.C.: "In view of the fact that Comrades Abdeeff, Bakaeff, Belenky, Yevdokimoff, Zinovieff, Kameneff, Lashevich, Sharoff (and thirty others, each mentioned by name), have made declarations in which they have admitted their errors of principle, have severed themselves from the Trotskyist platform, have condemned the fractional activities of the Trotskyist opposition, have desisted from such activities, and have announced their unqualified acceptance of all the resolutions of the Party and the Comintern<sup>1</sup>—as demanded by the Fifteenth Congress on December 18 and 19, 1927, they are hereby reaccepted into the Party with their former seniority, note being made in the documents, however, of their having ceased to be members of the Party during the period of their expulsion. Moscow, June 22, 1928, for the Chairman of the C.C.C., Y. Yakovleff."

Alike in respect of form and of content, this document forms a worthy drop-scene to the opposition comedy, in so far as it bears the names of Zinovieff and Kameneff. These two, received once more into grace, and already in 1928 given minor offices of State in Moscow, have begun to reclimb, though slowly, the ladder of the Soviet bureaucracy. Still, no member of the sometime opposition has since then attained any position giving much political power. For this there is a very good reason.

<sup>1</sup> Abbreviation for the Communist International.

## 9. UNDECLARED WAR

The law of motion upon which the struggles among the bolsheviks depend has continued in operation since the destruction of Trotskyism. Opposition has persisted as far as views and sentiments are concerned, although the opposition as an organisation has been shattered. Within a few months after the fall of the Trotskyists, the spirit of refractoriness to the discipline relentlessly enforced by Stalin began to revive. Looking back on recent years one gathers the impression that peace has not been really restored within the Party. Doubt as to the soundness of the trend followed since Stalin's success, personal dislike of the Caucasian leader (a man of blunt manners), and invincible attachment, above all among the intellectuals of the Party, to the brilliant personality of Trotsky, have combined to rob Stalin of some of the fruits of his victory. It was because his position remained unstable that Stalin could not re-admit the members of the Zinovieff-Kameneff group to commanding positions. The events of a very recent past have shown that he had good ground for dreading a fresh betrayal in this quarter.

## 10. THE RIGHT OPPOSITION

During the summer months of 1928, under pressure of an intensified economic crisis, the general discontent in the Party showed itself in a renewed attempt to organise an opposition. The Stalinist scribes had called the Trotskyist movement "ultra left"; and in the same quarter the new movement is described as a "right deviation". Despite his victory, there seems to have remained in Stalin's mind a dread which has made him forbid the use of the word "opposition" in this connexion. Whereas the revolt of the Trotskyists was a palace revolution, a Fronde of aristocrats of the intellectual world against the holders of power, the new movement came from beneath, from factory centres, from the nuclei in the working

enterprises. Its origin and direction were unmistakable. In the eleventh year after the proletarian revolution, the lowest grade of Party officials, the secretaries of the nuclei and of the district committees in the working-class quarters, found it increasingly difficult, in their dealings with the broad masses of the Party and the workers, to explain why it was becoming harder and harder to get a sufficiency of food, clothing, and shelter. Clothing was scarce; housing accommodation was more and more inadequate; food prices were rising. The recognition of these facts made the lesser officials, especially the communists in the trade unions, feel extremely anxious about the future, and inspired them with doubt as to the soundness of the Party trend. They said: "During the years 1925 and 1926, when the Party had adopted a conciliatory attitude towards the peasants, there was bread in abundance. To-day, when the pressure upon the well-to-do strata in the villages has been intensified once more, not only is there no grain for export, but there is not even enough to provide for our needs in Russia. On these grounds, simple but well argued, they demanded that the pressure on the countryside should be lightened, that the costly process of industrialisation should be slackened, and that socialist experiments in agriculture should for the time being be discontinued.

This natural movement crystallised, to begin with, in appropriate resolutions passed by some of the district committees, above all in the working-class quarters of Moscow; and at length, in September 1928, was voiced in a more distinguished and influential quarter, in the Moscow committee of the Party, which sets the tone for the other committees. This event brought Stalin's Central Committee to the front, and the indignant clamour about "deviating comrades" began again. The sluices of bolshevik oratory were opened, with the result that there was a flood of resolutions, condemnations, punishments. The leaders of the "right deviation" were stigmatised as opportunists, panic-makers, hesitators, petty bourgeois. Texts from Lenin once more came into fashion as

arguments. Unanimous decisions were engineered. Protests and demonstrations were organised—protests and demonstrations from the workers, “who understand our difficulties much better than do many of the older comrades”. At length a watchword was found. Agreed we have difficulties, said the C.C., but your petty-bourgeois spirit regards them as difficulties due to errors of leadership, whereas in reality they are but growing pains.

The Central Committee compelled the Moscow committee to cancel its September resolution, and to pass a second resolution rejecting the “right deviation”. It constrained the secretary of the Moscow committee, a well-known bolshevik leader named Uglanoff, to admit, in public, that he had “underestimated the danger of the right deviation”; and, when he had thus made his submission, accepted his “voluntary” resignation. He was replaced by Molotoff, one of Stalin’s most faithful henchmen. With Uglanoff fell the other leading officials of the Moscow committee, and also the leaders of the district organisations who had drafted the early resolutions on the subject. The extensive changes of personnel which took place in the provinces, and were duly reported in the press, showed that the “right deviation” was by no means confined to the capital. In White Russia, from 50 to 70 per cent of the officials of the nuclei were “freshly elected”. In the Crimea, the lower grades of the Party apparatus were very thoroughly “purged”. In Appendix VII I reproduce from “Pravda” the report of this Crimean purge, in order to show that the old pharisaical tone was retained in the new struggle.

Although the supporters of the new opposition had great numerical strength (comprising, in my opinion, a very large majority of the bolsheviks), no individual and no group dared to withstand the orders of the Central Committee. With the promptness of a well-made automaton, the whole organism of the Party wheeled round into Stalin’s line, termed the “general line”, and devoted itself to uttering indignant protests against views which it had itself been advocating but

yesterday. A very striking example of this sharp curve was that of the Moscow committee. Its press organ, the "Rabochaya Moskva", which had still voiced the "right deviation" on October 23rd, published on October 24th a large-type avowal of its errors, and has thenceforward displayed much eloquence and unrivalled servility in fighting against the enemies of "our C.C."

What was then only rumoured, had in the interim become unquestionable fact. Almost all the most outstanding bolsheviks who were not already compromised as Trotskyists, had become members of the right opposition: to name only three of the most important, Rykoff, the chairman of the people's commissaries, Tomskey, the chairman of the trade-union organisations, and Buharin, the chairman of the Communist International. Of the "heroes of the revolution", the only ones who were unequivocally on Stalin's side were Molotoff, Kaganovich, and Yaroslavsky, men whose practical services to the revolution and to the Soviet power had been small. The other members of the clique surrounding Stalin had little or no connexion with the Old Guard bolsheviks, and had never been among Lenin's close associates. This fact, which, in view of the bolshevik fondness for revolutionary tradition, was an awkward one, made Stalin, for the time being, deal gently with the new opposition. Buharin, indeed, as the boldest champion of the Rights, had to be rendered powerless forthwith. He was removed from the leadership of the Comintern, which thenceforward had no official chief; and Tomskey, likewise, was cashiered from his post as head of the central trade-union organisation. Rykoff, however, retained his offices in the State and in the Political Bureau down to November 1930; then he, too, was "fired", together with some of the other prominent Rights, although they had ranged themselves on the penitent's stool, declaring that they had taken no direct part in the opposition campaign.

Very notable is the fact that this new purge left almost completely unaffected one section of the bolshevik community,

namely the Red Army and the Red Navy. There were two reasons for this exemption, ranking as of equal importance: to an increasing extent the armed forces of Soviet Russia had (to outward seeming, at any rate) become bolshevised, while holding aloof from the struggles within the Party since Trotsky's dismissal in the beginning of 1924; and, on the other hand, Stalin was fully aware that he would only be digging his own grave were he to handle the army and navy as ruthlessly as he handled the other forces of the State.

By the end of 1930, Stalin's dictatorship had become established beyond dispute, his autocracy was unchallenged. The transformation of the apparatus of Party and State has been so complete that the present Soviet State no longer has any resemblance to the Red State of Lenin. Except for one or two members of the Old Guard, men with little or no influence, such as Kalinin, the chairman of the U.S.S.R., who is a sort of signboard to impress the workers and the peasants, the present leaders of Red Russia are political upstarts who have come into prominence since Lenin's death: Ordshonikidze, who is a Georgian, Menshinsky, who is a Pole, Yaroslavsky and Kaganovich, who are Jews, Molotoff and Voroshiloff, who are Russians—a motley group of persons who lack the intellectual strength of the Old Guard of the bolsheviks. Still gloomier becomes the picture at the lower levels. Even among the people's commissaries we find such mediocre men as Mikoyan, the minister for foreign and home trade, Antipoff, the minister for posts and telegraphs, Yanson, the minister for justice, and Tolmachoff, the minister for home affairs. Stalin's policy in these matters is plainly governed by the determination to tolerate none but insignificant, unconditionally loyal or servile persons in his immediate environment. As month succeeds month, less and less trouble is taken to hide the fact that the Red State is a personal dictatorship. Whereas previously Stalin had still been inclined to keep in the background, and to pull wires from behind the scenes,



at the end of the year 1929 he had his fiftieth birthday celebrated with a pomp which in other lands is witnessed only in the case of the wearers of crowns. Were it not that this Caucasian is an extremely sober-minded person, with his eyes fixed on the realities of politics, his head would soon be turned by the adulation which is continually being showered upon him.

## II. STALIN

What sort of a man is this Stalin who to-day stamps his imprint on the Soviet State? You may go hither and thither in Moscow asking all and sundry without getting any clear or reasonable information upon the point. It is one of the peculiarities of the Russian bolsheviks that little or nothing is said concerning the externals, the personal physiognomy of their leaders. Therein we may infer is an element of deliberate asceticism, of intentional depersonalisation, as far as outward seeming is concerned, of a regime which is essentially personal. Little enough was known even of Lenin while he lived, and not until his body had been laid in the tomb did the human characteristics of the founder of bolshevism begin to stand forth sharply in the popular imagination. It is true that while the great bolsheviks still live, streets, cities, administrative districts, battleships, and factories are christened by their names; but the leaders write no memoirs and accord no interviews, for such things would be regarded among the bolsheviks as "bad form". Thus it has come to pass that, except for the frequenters of the Kremlin, hardly any one in Russia has a definite conception of Stalin, though he is the mightiest man in the country.

Stalin is far more exclusive than an average monarch of the west. Whereas Kalinin is often to be seen in the streets taking solitary walks, and whereas the other Soviet magnates, such as Rykoff, Tomskey, Krylenko, Yenukidse, and the rest of them, drive about in open cars or are to be seen at the theatre, Stalin withdraws himself from the public eye. Only

on gala occasions, such as the great May and November parades in the Red Square, can the people get a plain view of the dictator of the Bolshevik Party. Like most of the Bolsheviks, Stalin is fond of going to the theatre, but even there he keeps in the shadows, in part perhaps because he is afraid of attempts at assassination. Shortly before the beginning of the performance a telephone message comes from the Kremlin to the theatre, conveying instructions (never in Stalin's name) to reserve a stage box, and in addition to keep a dozen places vacant in various parts of the auditorium. The box is filled by Stalin's friends, while the other places in the house are occupied by plain-clothes police officers. Stalin does not turn up until the lights have been lowered, and then takes his seat in the back of the box, where he is hidden by his companions. He vanishes no less furtively just before the fall of the curtain.

Since, as an accredited foreign journalist, I had access to the Soviet congresses and to the sittings of the Central Executive Committee, I have had plenty of opportunities of seeing Stalin at close quarters and have often heard him speak. I must admit, however, that these personal impressions of the man have not provided me with a key to the understanding of his strange personality. Nothing relevant can be learned from a study of his pale face, his black hair, a little curly, close-cropped; his cold, somewhat narrow eyes; his tranquil, rather sluggish demeanour. One thing, however, stands forth clearly, that neither in aspect nor in temperament is he Russian, his type being unmistakably Asiatic—though I know a great many other men from the Caucasus who seem fairly typical Russians. Apart from the foregoing, the only obvious characteristic is the lack of any trace of sentiment in Stalin's nature, which, for the rest, is entirely free from the heroic stamp of such a man as Bismarck or Napoleon and from the theatrical trend of such a man as Mussolini. My personal feeling is that Stalin is of little more than average intelligence, but one who ruthlessly marches towards his goal

under stress of a rigid will to power. I find myself quite unable to regard him as a noteworthy thinker whether in the political or in the economic field, and I do not even consider him to be an organiser of outstanding ability.

The ruler of one hundred and fifty million persons has had a sufficiently remarkable career. His father was a peasant, born in the Georgian village of Didi-Lilo near Tiflis, who in due time became a factory-hand, a shoemaker. The son, Yosif Vissarionovich Zhugashvili, spent his boyhood in the town of Gori near Tiflis, and was educated at a church (Russian Orthodox) school there. In 1893, when he was fourteen years of age, he entered the seminary at Tiflis to be trained for the priesthood. In the Georgia of those days, such seminaries were foci of anti-Russian Georgian nationalism, but some of the budding priests had a tincture of Marxian and internationalist ideas. Zhugashvili became leader of the Marxian circle. Already by the time he was eighteen he had begun to take part in the underground social-democratic movement and became known in the inner circle as a Marxian agitator in the factories and railway workshops of Tiflis. In 1899, when he was nearing twenty years of age, he was expelled from the seminary as "hopeless", and abandoned all thought of the priesthood to become a professional revolutionist. A year later, he was one of the acknowledged leaders of the Marxian organisation in Tiflis; and ere long he became subject to the influence of Kurnatovsky, a left-wing socialist, a Caucasian, who was in touch with Lenin. There had already begun the fight between the "Elders" and the "Youth" among the Russian Marxists, which two years later was to lead to the cleavage of the Russian social-democrats into bolsheviks (majoritarians) and mensheviks (minoritarians).

In 1901, when raids and domiciliary visitations were being made in Tiflis (and elsewhere) by the Ohrana, the tsarist secret police, Zhugashvili found it necessary to adopt the incognito of a conspirator, being known for the next sixteen years by a succession of aliases: David, Koba, Nisheradse,

Chichikoff, Ivanovich, and Stalin.<sup>1</sup> Practically all the leading bolsheviks, all the "underground" Russians of those conspiratorial days, have become known to fame by a pseudonym. Ulyanoff became Lenin; Radomyslsky became Zinovieff; Bronstein became Trotsky; and Sobelsohn became Radek.

It was in March 1902 that Stalin, having removed to Batoum, was arrested for the first time. For nearly two years he remained in prison on remand; then he was deported for three years to Eastern Siberia, to a place near Irkutsk. A month after arrival he escaped, and made his way back to Tiflis. There he edited the clandestine bolshevik periodical, "Struggle of the Proletariat". In 1905, the year of revolution, he issued his first important work, written in the Georgian tongue, a polemic against the mensheviks. Towards the end of this year, as representative of the Transcaucasian bolsheviks, he attended the bolshevik conference at Tammerfors in Finland, where for the first time he came into personal contact with Lenin. A year later, under the name of Ivanovich, he was at the Party congress of the bolsheviks in Stockholm; in 1907, he took part in the London Congress. In the interval between these two congresses, he was publishing clandestine journals, first in Tiflis and then in Baku, and was carrying on agitation among the Caucasian workers. Under his leadership, Baku became one of the citadels of bolshevism. At this date, moreover, Stalin appears to have been among the leaders of one of the great "expropriations" effected to swell the Party funds. In Tiflis a convoy of money, guarded by soldiers, was attacked by the revolutionists; bombs were used; and the treasure was successfully carried off.

In March 1908, Stalin was again arrested, and after eight months' imprisonment was deported to the northern province of Vologda. Escaping thence a few months later, he returned to Baku. In 1910, the Ohrana laid hands on him once more, and sent him back to Vologda. Escaping in 1911, he was sent

<sup>1</sup> Coined from the Russian word for steel. "Stalin" means "the man of steel".

by the Party leaders to Petersburg, was seized there by the authorities, and deported to Vologda for the third time. Yet again he fled from the place of exile, and made his way to Petersburg, where he now became a member of the Central Committee of the Party. In 1912, he was at the Party conference in Piaguc (all the Party conferences and congresses were held abroad), and participated in the founding of "Pravda", the Party organ. In April the Ohrana arrested him and banished him to Naryn, in the primeval forest of western Siberia. Ere long he was back in Petersburg, and then turned up at the Party assembly in Cracov. In the spring of 1913 he was for the sixth time in the hands of the police, and was soon on his way to Siberia once more.

The chronicles do not tell us whether Stalin had wearied of the hunted life of an escapee or whether the tsarist police kept a better watch on him henceforward; at any rate he now spent four long years on the Yenisei, at a village within the arctic circle. It was only the March revolution of 1917 which at length set him free from this Siberian wilderness. In May he became a member of the Political Bureau of the Party, which carried on a fierce struggle against the first revolutionary government of Russia, the democratic government. The struggle was a fight for political power, and most of the work had to be done "underground". In the November days of 1917 which, whatever the final upshot, will always be famous in history, Stalin was one of the "big five" who prepared the bolshevik rising and helped to carry it through.

After the victory of the bolsheviks, for four years Stalin was people's commissary for nationalities, and was at the same time the chief of the Workers' and Peasants' Inspection which supervised the youthful State apparatus. In 1922 he became secretary, and in 1923, during Lenin's last illness, secretary general of the Party, which made him steersman of the whole political apparatus. Until then he had always kept in the background, and, though wielding considerable influence, had been little known to the masses. Not until after

Lenin's death was his name frequently mentioned, but he continued to work behind the screen of Zinovieff and Kamenef at the time when it was his principal task to frustrate the ambitions of Trotsky. Finally, in 1925, the last veils were lifted. The ultimate stages of his rise to autocratic power have already been described.

Stalin's life history is typical of that of a bolshevik revolutionist. There are two things in such careers which are sources of unending astonishment to us of the West: first of all, the incredible will power and personal energy of these men who, despite incessant police persecution and intense personal hardship, unhesitatingly marched toward their goal; and, secondly, the forbearance which the tsarist regime showed toward such formidable and dangerous warriors. The notorious bolsheviks have taken over many of the tsarist methods—but they deal more straitly with their enemies!

## 12. PARASITES?

No doubt the iron discipline of the Party produces a grotesquely automatic obedience and manifests itself in the form of the most odious excesses whenever opposition raises its head; but this discipline has a more agreeable side in bolshevik community life. It would be foolish and unjust to deny that most of the bolsheviks show great devotion to their State, and manifest a capacity for self-sacrifice which is rarely seen in the political parties of democratic countries. Just as the bolshevik "order" is more intolerant and more doctrinaire than were the most intolerant and most doctrinaire religious communities of the Middle Ages; so, likewise does it excel these organisations in respect of the strength of its "rule" and of the greatness of the demands it makes on its members. No one should give credit to the fable according to which the Russian bolsheviks are a horde of idle parasites. To be a member of the Party means for a Russian to devote all his energies and every minute of his time to its service, means

to be ever on the look-out for chances of doing additional work for the Party. Only the "upper ten thousand" of the Party can allow themselves the luxury of occasional indulgence in a constitutional tendency to sloth, if they suffer from anything of the kind; but even among the Old Guard there are very few devoid of the typical bolshevik energy, a restless energy, a capacity for indefatigable activity, which is not indeed always productive, but is invariably the expression of a zeal for duty. Very few of the bolsheviks think of limiting their work to an eight-hour or a seven-hour day. When they have finished their immediate job in the Party bureau, in the office of State, in the economic enterprise to which they are attached, their day's task is far from being ended. Now begins a new round of activities, in the club, in the assembly room, at the wireless, at the editorial office. Most of them, too, have some routine occupation in the Party. During the struggle with the opposition there were instances in which Party members had no time for weeks on end to set foot in the offices where they were supposed to be carrying out their regular professional work. I remember, for instance, that in the People's Commissariat for Foreign Affairs during the days of the great fight with Trotsky it was very hard to get hold of any of the leading officials. The catastrophic proportions of the peasants' strike against the grain levy in the autumn and winter of the year 1927 were officially ascribed to the fact that the Party, being wholly engaged for three months in internal disputes, had had no time to attend to its governmental duties. Surely that is illustration enough of the way in which the bolsheviks sacrifice everything to the cause of their "order".

This unresting activity of the bolsheviks, this persistent readiness, are the result of the fundamental character of the bolshevik regime, deriving from the fact that the Russian communists form an extremely small minority of the population. They and they only are interested in the maintenance of the regime; they and they only are entirely trustworthy in

the bolshevik sense of the term; and that is why the full burden of responsibility and leadership must be borne upon their shoulders. Being surrounded by a world, both Russian and foreign, to which the aims and methods of bolshevism are at best indifferent, the members of the Communist Party are always campaigning, ever on the watch, continually engaged on outpost duty. The greater the economic difficulties of Soviet Russia, the more remote the prospect of the world revolution to which they have looked for deliverance, the greater becomes their sense of isolation, and the more must those who march in the Stalinist ranks feel suspicious of outsiders.

### 13. PARTY MEMBERS

The word "tovarishch" (comrade) has, in the course of daily life in Soviet Russia, become an elastic term, just as during the French revolution the word "citoyen" gradually lost its primitive revolutionary signification. The name is now used without distinction to denote almost all Soviet citizens, the title of honour being refused only to the "bourgeois elements". But the "Party member"—who during the years of the civil war was regarded by all Russians who were not members of the Party as a peculiar being, both dreaded and hated, alien, not altogether Russian and not even altogether human—is to-day even more sharply differentiated from the masses. In the popular consciousness, this severance of Party members from all others has become more and more marked in proportion as the annihilation of anti-bolshevik parties and classes has levelled and proletarianised the whole Russian nation. As long as there were still *mensheviks*, social revolutionaries, landowners, workers, rural proletarians, merchants, etc.—in a word, as long as there still existed a political and social stratification of the Russian people—the bolsheviks still comprised a party. Theirs was a party like any other political party, with the difference that it happened to rule. Now that the one hundred and fifty millions of Soviet citizens, not-



withstanding considerable gradations in the matter of pay, have to the extent of 95 per cent been proletarianised and deprived of political rights, so that they exist apart as a great grey mass of "non-Party persons", the distinction between them and the Party members, the bolsheviks, has become the only broad distinction of status which continues to exist in the country.

#### 14. THE NEW RULING CLASS

The upshot is that the Bolshevik Party has ceased to be a party because there are no other parties. The name "All-Russian Communist Party" (of the Bolsheviks) is nothing more than a fig-leaf to hide the naked fact that Russia has once more acquired a ruling class, one more sharply distinguished from the masses, one endowed with more outstanding powers, than was known even in tsarist Russia. We shall have occasion by and by to give further instances of the extraordinarily privileged position occupied by Party members in Russian daily life. For the moment, however, we are only interested in studying the effect of this exceptional position upon the bolsheviks themselves. Let us begin at the very top. The "iron battalions" of the Party, the hundred or so of chiefs, live behind the walls of the Kremlin in Moscow, the ancient citadel of the Muscovite autocrats. Before the war, when the government of Russia was centred in Petersburg, the gates of the Kremlin stood open for any one to enter. Even in Petersburg the palaces and the offices of State were not more closely guarded than in any other modern capital. To-day the Kremlin is surrounded by sentries as if it were a powder-magazine! Men with fixed bayonets stand on watch at every gate, field guns and machine guns surmount the walls, the place is strongly garrisoned, and all sorts of precautions are taken to safeguard the leaders of the realm and to protect them from the gaze of the profane. There is a hospital within the fortress with a staff of specialists to care for the health

of the Red élite. There have been two bolshevik documents to disclose to the outer world some of the secrets of the Kremlin: a short story by Boris Pilnyak,<sup>1</sup> entitled *The Unwaning Moon*; and Joffe's farewell letter to Trotsky. I shall not furnish details concerning these interesting publications: as regards Pilnyak's book, because the author wrote cryptically, and subsequently recanted; and as regards Joffe's letter, because Joffe was very ill when he wrote it, and it therefore cannot rank as unquestionable evidence. But the two documents have so much in common, and the Party was so much exercised about their publication, that they seem to me to show beyond question that very queer things go on in the Kremlin. Certainly the lives and the health of the leading bolsheviks are cared for with a scrupulousness which can only be paralleled in the case of members of the great royal houses.

Set apart from the grey mass by bolshevik tradition and by the requirements of the dictatorship, the bolsheviks have developed their own peculiar ways of living and their own methods of social intercourse. Among them alone, as contrasted with the ordinary Russian proletarians, do we find a conspicuous reserve towards, an unconcealed distrust of, all who are not members of their own order, a feeling of aloofness which even personal fondness and close friendship cannot entirely overcome. Only when among themselves are they (sometimes) frank and cordial. Whenever an "alien element" is present, they put on mysterious airs and are obviously a prey to hidden thoughts. They have a moral code of their own fashioning, have for practical purposes a language of their own, have separate dwellings, separate clubs, separate sanatoria and health resorts. They have a sense of honour peculiar to themselves, and ways of living distinct from those of the generality. Whereas wages and salaries in Soviet Russia are hardly less differentiated than in capitalist countries, no bolshevik can earn more than 275 roubles a month, this being

<sup>1</sup> See below, p. 242.

termed the "Party maximum". Any surplus of income beyond the stipulated amount is turned over to the Party funds, or to benevolent institutions. As far as I have been able to observe, the regulation of salaries is very strictly observed, and breaches of it are harshly punished.

In this matter, likewise, rumour is unjust to the bolsheviks, for, beyond question, no considerable percentage of the Party members lead luxurious lives. On the average their standard of life is an extremely moderate one, though indeed somewhat "bourgeois" in comparison with the poverty of the broad masses. I have come across very few instances in which Party members or their near kin gave plain indication of "capitalist" or luxurious habits. Ordinary offences are, as a rule, punished more severely in a communist than in any one who is not a member of the Party, although the extent of public disgrace is restricted by reasons of State, which in this country are identical with Party interests. For instance Stekloff, formerly editor in chief of "Izvestia", when guilty of grave offences (some of them coming within the scope of the criminal law), was not subjected to a public trial but—as often happens in such cases—was condemned by a Party court. Nor is there any ground for readily accepting a view which forms one of the regular elements of anti-bolshevik propaganda, namely that most of the bolsheviks are ex-criminals. I must insist that a very large percentage of the Party comprises fanatics who are profoundly assured of the rightness of their own convictions.

Although, throughout Russia, considerable numbers of those who are not members of the Party would gladly safeguard their livelihood in some measure by getting a Party card, the fulfilment of this desire is far from easy, seeing that candidates for Party membership are subjected to an extremely rigorous examination. Even for acceptance as a "candidate for Party membership", it is necessary to have proletarian certificates of good character and recommendations from Party members; and the would-be candidate must furnish evidence of having

done "public service", by which is meant, not as would be meant in foreign lands, services of general utility, but specific work on behalf of the bolshevik regime on one of the "fighting fronts". Such "public service" must be continued during the probationary period, which usually lasts two years, being comparable to the novitiate of religious orders; and it must be supplemented by the study of "political science", this meaning the doctrine and history of Marxian communism. Before becoming a full member, the candidate has usually to pass an examination in his knowledge of bolshevism and his fitness for undertaking political activities in the Party sense. Still, these rules have not always been strictly enforced. In the mass levies of 1924 and 1928, to which reference has already been made, there was a considerable relaxation of the rule, since the object was, not so much to attract new and active champions, as to obtain a large force of "genuine workers". It seems likely enough that there will be further mass levies in the near future, for the greater the economic distress of the regime and the greater the consequent dissatisfaction among the masses, the more does the Party find it necessary to furnish statistical evidence of the affection of the proletariat.

### 15. PURGES

The purging of the Party to rid it of undesirables is one of the main tasks of the Control Commissions. Every day, without much parade being made of the matter, dozens of communists are expelled from the Party, but from time to time there are more extensive purges. The following table is compiled from figures published by the Party:

	1922	1923.	1924	1925.	1926.	1927.
Expulsions ..	35,900	25,500	15,622	20,004	24,589	16,718
Voluntary and Mechanical						
Withdrawals ..	14,100	15,300	7,501	12,094	21,088	27,340

The large number of "voluntary and mechanical withdrawals"

during the last two years mentioned in the table may doubtless be referred to the fact that very large numbers of inconspicuous supporters of the opposition have been quietly removed in this way, although the Party leaders have always maintained that the opposition comprises only about three thousand persons. The figures concerning the reasons for expulsion from the Party are likewise instructive. The Party press publishes an accurate list giving the names of the expelled and the causes of expulsion. Tabulating these lists for the first quarter of the year 1928, I found that nearly half of all the expulsions had been effected on the ground of "official derelictions" (embezzlement and venality) and on account of drunkenness or (a special head) "systematic drunkenness". I do not think that the frequency of these offences in the expulsion list signifies that such offences are really very common in bolshevik Party life, for I hold, rather, that the figures indicate the importance the Party attaches to the good behaviour of its members. Certainly in view of the general frequency of alcoholism in Russia, the number of drunkards in the list of the expelled is not large. I want to emphasise the fact that nowhere have I met so large a number of fanatical teetotallers as among the bolsheviks, whose ranks likewise contain an increasing proportion of non-smokers—which also means a great deal in Russia. It is true that some of the leading bolsheviks are known to be hard drinkers. Furthermore, the Party is by no means puritanical as regards sexual matters. The anti-bolshevik gossip about "commissaries' mistresses" is not entirely devoid of foundation, but as to the "sexual orgies of the bolsheviks" concerning which there is so much prattle in foreign lands, these are altogether exceptional, being prevented, if by nothing else, by the system of mutual espionage. An exception to this statement must be made as regards Young Communists. Of these, more anon.

Among the lists of the expelled we find classical instances of bolshevik cant. For example, as cause of expulsion, "part-ballast" is frequently given. This is an abbreviation for "Party

ballast", the signification being that superfluous elements in the Party are thrown overboard. Among these superfluous persons are "alien", "ideologically alien", "uncommunistic", "disintegrative", "fortuitous", "supererogatory" elements. Other reasons for expulsion are: religious observance; and, an important one, the concealment of a bourgeois origin or past. We read, for instance, that X has been "expelled as a sometime gendarme"; and that Y has been "expelled as the daughter of a priest".

## 16. THE RED CARD

On the whole, the Party is very exacting in its demands upon its members. In return, however, it gives them extensive rights, and invests them with a considerable measure of authority in public life. The Party member is one of the lords of the country. One who is a Party member is something more than a mere proletarian, and the Red Card, the token of membership, works wonders in the daily life of contemporary Russia. The following episode will give the reader a vivid idea of the overwhelming influence of members of the Party.

The house in which I lived in Moscow was a nationalised or, to speak more accurately, a communalised building, managed by a cooperative of the tenants. The chairman of this organisation was, as usual, a communist worker. When my lease expired in January 1927, the general meeting of the tenants (which is formally supreme) did not wish to renew it, for the reason that some of those who were living in damp cellars had put forward a claim for my room. The matter seemed to be dragging on indefinitely, and I was already considering the advisability of appealing to the higher authorities, when, one day, a friend of mine in the house informed me on the quiet that the matter had been settled in my favour. I asked why the tenants' meeting had suddenly changed its opinion. That was not what had happened, answered my

well-wisher, but Ivanoff had espoused my cause. "Ivanoff, the chairman?"—"Yes, he is a communist." That had settled the question. Ivanoff's vote outweighed those of the two hundred "comrades" who were not members of the Party.

Here is another case. With some friends I was making a snow-shoe excursion in the neighbourhood of Moscow. We were set upon by a gang of drunken village youths, who mobbed us because we were strangers, and because there were some German ladies among our party. Since these rowdies became more and more aggressive, we made ready to defend ourselves by physical force, but this only intensified their misconduct. One of the fellows took a dirty scrap of paper out of his pocket and declared that we should do ill to touch him, for he was a soldier of the Red Army. That was the signal for the others to renew their onslaught. We were expecting to be handled very roughly, when, at the last moment, a young man ran up shouting to his drunken fellow countrymen: "Here, what are you all up to?"—"Go to hell. This is no concern of yours. I am a soldier of the Red Army"! answered the leader of the hooligans. The newcomer sprang upon the boor, pushed him violently back, and from his own pocket drew a Red Card, which he held up so that all present could see it. "Give me your Red Army voucher!" he said imperiously to the defender of the fatherland. The latter instantly complied, and within a minute or two, without another word being spoken, the louts, drunken though they were, had vanished without attempting to molest us further.

One January night, in the streets of the capital, my friend N was robbed of his fur cap by footpads. N went at once to the nearest police station and reported the incident. The sergeant on duty, being too lazy to enter the matter in his book, growled out that there was no use bothering about the loss of a cap, for in Moscow there were dozens of thefts far more serious than this every night. When my friend insisted that a note should be made of what had happened, the sergeant lost his temper, saying: "I expect you've simply dropped

your cap, seeing that you are drunk!" Amazed at this aspersion, N insisted that he must be examined by a police surgeon who would decide whether he was drunk or not. The sergeant thereupon sent him in charge of a policeman to another police station, since there was no surgeon at the first one. At the second station there was no surgeon on duty. At length, at a third police station, there was found a surgeon who said that certainly N was not drunk, and that probably the sergeant at the first station was! He gave my friend a written certificate to the effect that "Citizen N is perfectly sober", whereupon N, with his attendant policeman, returned to the first police station. Having looked at the surgeon's certificate, the sergeant on duty asked N: "Well, what do you want now?"—"I want you to make a written note that I have been robbed."—"Go to the devil with your written note, Citizen, we have more important business to do here! I tell you I shan't make any note about your fur cap!"—"All right, let me use the telephone!"—"The telephone here is for service purposes, and cannot be used by the public!"—"Citizen Sergeant, I formally demand to be allowed to telephone at once to my friend Y, to whom I wish to recount the events of to-night." My acquaintance mentioned the name of a widely known communist. This worked a miracle. The sergeant became a new man, was extremely amiable, addressed N as "Comrade", wrote a lengthy report, begged him to say nothing to Y, and offered to send a police escort to see him safely home. Further, the sergeant advised N to go on the morrow, armed with the report, to a police station he named where there was a stock of goods confiscated from thieves. "There you can choose a fine fur cap and claim it as your own!"

The number of such instances could be indefinitely multiplied, but I will content myself with mentioning one more case in illustration of my thesis that to be a member of the Party is, even in ordinary working life, far more advantageous than to be a mere proletarian. On January 4, 1928, the following news item, supplemented by an illustration, appeared



in the daily newspaper "Rabochaya Moskva": "At the present time in the Moscow organisation a list is being made of the party members who are unemployed. The object is to train the unemployed communists in order to further the development of the national economy, and to replace some of the inefficient workers in the Soviet apparatus by experienced members of the Party. In Moscow to-day there are 1,500 unemployed communists. Our illustration shows the work of the inquiry proceeding in the urban district of Krasno-Presnya." The Moscow Party organisation cannot seriously have supposed that the training of these 1,500 communists would greatly accelerate the "development of the national economy"; and the main object must certainly have been to give the unemployed members of the Party jobs at the expense of "inefficient" workers in the Soviet apparatus. At that time there were 130,000 unemployed in Moscow.

It will be seen, then, that, although the Red Card does not entitle the holder to expect a fat livelihood, or even to look for chances of a rapid advance in life, it nevertheless helps to ensure his subsistence, and protects him to some extent from the attentions of the political police, whose suspicions are apt to fall on every Soviet citizen. A safeguarding of subsistence and a considerable measure of personal security are of such importance in Soviet Russia that the individual may well be willing for their sake to accept the burdens of a bolshevik life—if he be allowed to shoulder them.

## CHAPTER EIGHT

### THE DIVINE RIGHT OF THE BOLSHEVIKS

#### 1. SUPPRESSION OF FREE POLITICAL LIFE

FASCISM in Italy has completely destroyed the political life of the country and has excluded other political parties from any share in public activities. But the fascists do not pronounce it a crime against the State to belong to any other than the ruling party or even to entertain any other than fascist ideas in the privacy of one's own mind. Within a year of winning supreme power, the bolsheviks acquired the monopoly of political activity which it took the fascists a quinquennium to achieve. We may regard July 6, 1918, the day on which the German envoy Count Mirbach was assassinated by the Left social revolutionary Blumkin, as marking the death of the last political party other than the Communist Party tolerated by the bolsheviks. They made this assassination a pretext for a massacre of the Left social revolutionaries and for depriving the survivors of any lingering vestiges of influence. By the autumn of the same year, twelve months after the November revolution, the Left social revolutionaries had been, as Trotsky emphatically expressed it, "politically liquidated".

But the bolsheviks were not content with the political liquidation of all other parties. They made personal attacks upon the individual leaders of these parties, "liquidating" them also, partly with fire-arms, and partly by means of deportation and imprisonment. Down to this day numerous mensheviks and social revolutionaries, that is to say members of other socialist parties than that of the bolsheviks, are languishing in the jails into which the monasteries of the northern provinces have been transformed and in the villages of northern Siberia. Except in so far as they have relatives or friends, they have long been forgotten, and to-day (old and

crushed as most of them are) they can no longer do any harm to the bolshevik system; but they remain under duress because it is not the way of the bolsheviks to forgive political adversaries. Talking to some American visitors, Stalin once sarcastically voiced the attitude of the bolsheviks to other parties in the following words: "Here in Soviet Russia, likewise, there are several parties—the only difference being that in Soviet Russia one of the parties rules while the others are kept in jail."

Those who rule by force (and not all absolute rulers come under this category) are wont to take a certain amount of trouble to find some sort of moral justification for the oppression of those who do not see eye to eye with themselves and for the monopolisation of power. They do this were it only in order to excuse themselves to posterity. Such attempts at justification almost invariably take one or other of two forms. Sometimes an appeal is made to the force of circumstances; at other times the rulers talk of divine right. The latter plea of justification, substantially the plea put forward by the bolsheviks, is more dangerous than the former, inasmuch as, like every doctrine of salvation, it implies, if it be logically upheld, a claim to universal and unrestricted power. We shall have to remind ourselves of this when we come to consider the world mission of the bolsheviks. It is to Zinovieff that we owe the most effective formulation of the bolsheviks' claim to divine right. In the preface to his *History of the Communist Party of Russia* he writes: "The Communist Party of Russia is not simply one among many parties. History had decided, that the C.P.R. was to become a mighty weapon for promoting human advance and was to be the most important instrument of the world revolution. Its significance is enormous and unexampled, not only in the history of Russia, but in universal history as well." Put instead of "history" thus impersonated, the word "providence", and we shall recognise that the writer's justification of bolshevik power is typically theocratic. Do not let me be misunderstood. In the case of

these "modern" dictatorships, the claim to a divine mission is much stronger and more substantial than the claim of many ruling families to divine right. For these latter, at the outset at least, their talk about "divine right" was nothing more than the humble expression of a hope for divine aid, or of gratitude for having been granted sovereign power; it was not regarded as a charter of infallibility or of unrestricted power for the "champion of God". Bolshevik divine right, on the other hand, is on the same footing as the tradition of Islam and as that of the Christian crusaders. The bolsheviks do not, indeed, claim infallibility in respect of the particular activities of the Party and still less as to the doings of individual Party members; they even, at times, make a parade of the fact that they are liable to errors and weaknesses—doing this especially when they are holding converse with foreigners. But unconditionally they claim infallibility for the resolutions passed at Party congresses, or, in other words, for the official dogmas. "We have to believe", said Trotsky, "that in the last resort the Party is always right". Lenin's writings form the Bible, and the leading resolutions of the Party congresses are the œcumenical decisions of this new Church. The account of the struggle with the opposition given in the preceding chapter will have shown how unconditionally bolshevik dialectic bases itself upon these dogmas.

## 2. THE OLD CHURCH

The bolsheviks' claim to infallibility brings them into sharp conflict with the Russian national religion, with the Greek Catholic or Orthodox faith. The words "national religion" must not be too strictly interpreted in this instance. The Greek Church is the dominant form of worship in Russia, nothing more. Its doctrine has never become the religion of the country in the sense in which Roman Catholicism was the religion of medieval Europe. The Christian missionaries who first entered the Russian plains did not come primarily as the

heralds of a new religious outlook but as the delegates of a firmly established foreign hierarchy, that of the Eastern Empire. Whereas in the countries of Europe, Christianity was diffused by the native-born, by missionaries of the same stock as those to whom they brought the glad tidings, the missionaries who introduced the new faith into Russia were foreigners, Greeks. Europe was Christianised at a time when the Roman Church, though already the religious centre of Christianity, had not yet become a political power; and even later the papacy continued in great measure to preserve the character of being above and beyond the State. On the other hand, when the Christian missionaries from Byzantium entered Russia, the Church in Byzantium had ceased to be a free organisation. The Byzantine emperors' chief reason for undertaking the conversion of Russia was that their dominions were threatened from the south and from the east by the Turks and the Arabs, and they hoped to find new sources of strength on the northern shores of the Black Sea. Russia never had a whole-hearted liking for the emissaries from Byzantium. Centuries passed before this foreign mode of worship was cordially adopted by the Russians, and even then the adoption was in great measure a matter of externals. To these northern Slavs, who were primitive people, the natural religion of the steppes was far more congenial than was the highly elaborated wisdom imported from the ancient intellectual centres on the Mediterranean.

If, nevertheless, we foreigners have an impression that the Greek Church has struck deep roots in Russia, this is not so much due to any merit of the Church itself as to the fact that the secular rulers of Russia gradually detached the Greek hierarchy from Byzantium and established in Russia a State Church which retained as Byzantine elements only the ornate form of divine service and the rigid asceticism of conventual life—two elements that were fascinating to the simple minds of the Russians. To how small an extent the spirit of the Greek Church has become genuinely Russianised

in its new home may be gathered from the fact that Russian ecclesiastical art has never ceased to copy Byzantine models. It is true that writers on the history of Russian art are fond of talking about the Russification of the Byzantine artistic style, but we see how little this really amounts to when we consider the transformation which ecclesiastical art experienced in the West. How small, for instance, is the difference between the mosque of Saint Sophia in Constantinople (A.D. 537) and the Church of the Redcemer in Moscow (completed in 1883) when compared with the gulf that yawns between a Roman basilica and the creations of the Gothic and rococo styles. Ideas which have not been thoroughly absorbed into the mind cannot induce creative expression, as is plainly shown by Russo-Byzantine ecclesiastical art.

The Russians seem to have transferred to the members of their own priesthood the dislike they had felt long ago for the Greek ecclesiastics. The Russian higher clergy, the so-called "black clergy", was out of touch with the common people for two reasons: partly because these clerics, being invested with functions of State, were more or less identified with the detested officialdom; and partly because they moved in intellectual spheres which the common people, whose Christianity was but skin-deep, could never enter. The lower clergy, on the other hand, was too close to the populace, was too uncultured and poverty-stricken, to inspire respect. The village pope married, had a large family of children, was dirty and uneducated, was ill-fed like the peasants of his flock and often drank as hard as any muzhik—with the result that to the muzhik he seemed little more than God's man-of-all-work, useful for the performance of certain specific and necessary religious functions.

### 3. SECTARIANISM

The prevalence of sectarianism was due to this lack of touch between the Russian national character and the Orthodox

Church. The profoundly religious instinct of the Russians, their strongly mystical tendencies, secured an outlet in the formation of religious commonwealths which were often of an extremely bizarre kind. The sectaries would have nothing to do with priests as intermediators between themselves and God, desiring a more direct road to heaven, as was natural to those who were in such close touch with earth and sky. The "startsy" represented the transition between the true priesthood and a priestless religious commonwealth. Among them were divines of the type of Rasputin, persons who, lacking spiritual culture and often devoid of moral principle, proclaimed themselves the chosen of God, and in many cases acquired widespread fame as miracle-workers. But it would be a mistake to regard the "startsy" as having invariably been common cheats. Among the more extreme sectaries the antagonism to authority sometimes went so far that even revelation through Jesus Christ was denied, for a simple peasant would have a revelation of his own and would name himself Christ. The fundamental characteristic of this sectarianism, is, in the last analysis, the denial of divine attributes to the Supreme Being, the humanisation of God.

This denial of ecclesiastical authority by the sectaries often went hand in hand with antagonism to the secular ruler. Before the time of Alexander II's reforms, there were sects that campaigned against serfdom; even after the liberation of the serfs we find the sectaries having recourse to political methods of combat like the tax strike and the refusal of military service. Common, indeed, to almost all the Russian sects, was, furthermore, a certain hostility to culture, which was an outcome of the ascetic trend of the sectarian movement; and ~~this was~~ no mere expression of the eccentricity of little groups of "peculiar", but was the outcome of what was, to say the least of it, a mass psychosis. Witness, for instance, the later works and consider the life aims of the greatest Russian imaginative writer of the period now under consideration—Tolstoy.

## 4. THE EPOCH OF TOLERATION

The apparent instability of ecclesiastical life in Russia had led the revolutionaries to hope that after the revolution there would be a rapid decay in religious belief. These hopes were doomed to disappointment. It became apparent that the Russians in general clung with great tenacity and with much self-sacrifice to the Orthodox faith, and were inclined to turn more and more to the Church in proportion as other barriers were broken down and other props removed. The bolsheviks therefore regarded it as expedient to reopen the churches they had closed and to give the lower clergy greater freedom of action. But the toleration which the Soviet government extended towards the Church for the ensuing decade was based, in great measure, upon the confident expectation that the new bolshevik doctrine of salvation would be strong enough of itself to overcome "religious superstition". Down to the year 1928, the fight against Church and religion was carried on mainly by propagandist methods. The Party founded a society, the Atheists' League, which was well supplied with funds and disseminated large quantities of anti-religious literature—posters, pamphlets, and books. The League also issues a weekly, "The Atheist", for popular consumption, but well produced from the artistic and literary point of view. This periodical devotes itself, partly to making mock of religion, and partly to the scientific refutation of religious and ecclesiastical doctrines. The campaign is not directed exclusively against the Orthodox Church, for in posters, pamphlets, and periodicals the Russian patriarchs are always shown to be working hand in hand with the papacy, with the leading lights of the Protestant Churches, with Jehovah, Allah, and Mohammed. Another favourite method of anti-religious controversy is to represent God Almighty as in league with the tsars, the rich, well-to-do peasants, gendarmes; or, varying the theme, to depict the poor workers and peasants as being mercilessly flogged by God the Father. In a thousand ways,



the idea is instilled into the masses that the gods of all Churches and all creeds are but the assistants and the souteneurs of the exploiters and the rich. The religious doctrines of the creation of the world and of the incarnation are fought by the weapons of Darwinism and by lessons in anatomy, the exposition being in the popular style and often extremely primitive. As a supplement to literary propaganda, at the seasons of ecclesiastical festivals, "The Atheist" organises an "anti-religious carnival"—a masquerade in which Young Communists dressed as priests make fun of religious institutions and practices. To these performances, children are especially invited.

This brings us to the most potent weapon used in the bolshevik campaign against religion—to the schools. It need hardly be said that religious instruction is prohibited in Soviet schools, while the most vigorous attempts are made there to inoculate the children with bolshevik philosophy. It is no exaggeration to say that the main object of the Soviet schools is to bolshevise the Russian youth. Throughout the Russian school programme (to which we shall return) there runs like a red thread an insistence upon the contrast between tsarist Russia and the Soviet State; and at the same time, in the descriptions of the abominations of the old regime, the Church stands forth in a lurid light beside the great landowners and factory owners. Since parents who have their children's interests at heart have no choice but to enrol these in the organisations of communist youth, anti-religious propaganda is likewise unceasingly at work out of school hours. The system of anti-religious propaganda is crowned by a law to the effect that no religious instruction may be given to any Soviet citizen before the age of eighteen. Theoretically, of course, it is possible that religious teaching may be given at home, but, as far as towns are concerned, the practical importance of this is inconsiderable, seeing that parents would expose themselves to grave dangers if detected. Besides, schoolchildren are systematically trained to repudiate parental

authority, and in this way are to a considerable extent immunised against the danger of infection with "religious superstition" through the instrumentality of their parents. In the countryside, on the other hand, anti-religious propaganda among young people is far less effective than in the towns, above all for the reason that the rural schoolteachers are for the most part free from bolshevik leanings, while in the villages the communist youth organisations play a very small part. All the same, in general the young peasants are much less religious than their elders. As for the town youth of modern Russia, they are for the most part by this time atheistic, or, to speak more strictly, antitheistic. They will have absolutely nothing to do with religion.

Of course during the epoch of toleration, during the first ten years of the bolshevik regime, the toleration shown towards persons religiously inclined did not extend to members of the Party. As we have seen, "the practice of religion" and "superstition" have been frequent reasons for expulsion from the Party. Even in the case of State officials and other public functionaries who were not members of the Party, a public profession of faith as witnessed by attendance at church was apt to lead to a discharge from employment. Nevertheless it may be said that, until recently, the bolsheviks were content to deprive the various religious communities of organisational power and of the chance of attracting new adherents. By skilfully devised legal regulations concerning the composition of the religious communities, it was made impossible for the popes to store up considerable sums of money which might have been utilised for religious propaganda. In the same direction worked the confiscation of the vast treasures possessed by the Orthodox Church at the time of the revolution. To-day the religious communities of Russia are utterly impoverished, and are therefore incapable for the most part of effective action. As organisations they are further paralysed because their governing bodies are closely supervised and dragooned by the State, and above all by the political police, whenever

they try to transcend the limits of religious exercises as narrowly interpreted by the Soviet authority. The latter has arrested many of the higher clergy while supervising all the activities of the others, seeming to regard these persons as hostages, so to say, for the good conduct of the religious institutions over which they preside.

During difficult times the government has made a direct use of the leaders of the Church in order to tranquillise the religious-minded among the masses. For instance, in July 1927 the Soviet press published an appeal to the faithful from the supreme head of the Church (the "deputy patriarch" Sergius) and the seven archbishops. This document began by declaring that the Orthodox Church repudiated the tsarist regime, "which exploited the Church for its own purposes". Then the pastoral letter instructed the faithful to show their loyalty to the Soviet government "as legally established", and pronounced an anathema on those members of the Russian clergy who had fled the country. Simultaneously Sergius the metropolitan accorded an interview to a representative of "Izvestia", the chief press organ of the Soviet government, declaring that in case of war the government would have the full sympathy of the Holy Synod, while he adjured the clergy to be loyal. A clue to the origin of this remarkable document is afforded by the fact that in July 1927 the bolsheviks were seriously afraid of war with England, and I cannot doubt for a moment that the appeal of the Holy Synod was penned in the head office of the Ogpu. If further proof of this be needed, I may mention that "Izvestia", when publishing the appeal, described it as a belated attempt of the Synod to keep in touch with the broad masses of the people. The friendliness of the bolshevik press in thus printing at full length what was reputed to be a sort of swan song of its expiring ecclesiastical adversary was really touching.

## 5. THE LIVING CHURCH

To the epoch of toleration belongs the founding of the "Renovated" or "Living Church". I have already referred to the petrification of the Orthodox Church and to its estrangement from the broad masses of the people. Long before the revolution of 1917, some of the more vigorous spirits in the Orthodox hierarchy were well aware of these weaknesses. Attempts at reform were begun and continued, but availed nothing against the conservative trend of the erudite monasticism which played a leading role in the Old Church. Not even the earthquake of the year 1917 was able to shake the magnates of the Church out of their rut. True, the Church cut adrift from the State, and the patriarchate regained the independence of earlier centuries, but, after all, this step was dictated from without, seeing that the new, revolutionary State would have nothing to do with the Church. Amid the storms of the revolution there seemed to be no time for effective reform. At length, therefore, in 1922, a small group of opposition clergy broke away to found a "Renovated Church" which, while retaining the Orthodox dogmas, made considerable changes in ritual, aiming at greater simplicity and at comprehensibility to the masses. This reformed Church, which promptly declared itself a supporter of the Soviet State, accommodated itself likewise to the new political ways, for its priests were elected by the congregations, while it cleansed its churches of pomp and of ikons, and gave its religious assemblies a good deal of the aspect of soviets. We do not know even yet what part, if any, the Soviet government played in the foundation of the "Living Church". The bolsheviks strenuously deny having had anything to do with the matter, and certainly it seems rather quaint that Marxists should found Churches; but it cannot be denied that they handed over many of the finest and largest religious edifices, including the Moscow Church of the Redeemer, to the reformers. A noteworthy fact is that, governmental patronage notwithstanding,

the Renovated Church has had very little success, although the Orthodox Church continues to flourish.

## 6. THE NEW GOD

The reader has now been made familiar with the bolshevik claim to "divine right"; he knows the rigid dogmatism, the intolerance of the bolsheviks. It would be a mistake, however, for him to regard bolshevism simply as a Church or as a religion. No doubt the Bolshevik Party exhibits many of the aspects of a religious order, uses many of the weapons of a Church militant, manifests in the daily struggle many of the qualities of "priestcraft"—but, all the same, it explicitly repudiates the ideology of religion. The most famous theoreticians of bolshevism, with Lenin at their head, have always been strongly opposed to such attempts as Lunacharsky's and Gorky's to expound a metaphysical interpretation of socialism. Again and again did Lenin denounce such "aberrations"; as in 1908, in an article against Tolstoyanism, and towards the close of 1913, in two letters to Gorky. Still, he raised no objection when bolshevik agitators availed themselves of religious concepts in order to influence the masses. Since his death, his disciples have made a copious use of the same methods. In Soviet Russia a cult hardly to be distinguished from African fetishism has been established upon the corpse, the likeness, the name, and the words of Lenin.

The Lenin cult, Lenin worship, began on the day of the master's death. He died in a little village near Moscow. His body was promptly brought to the capital to lie in state in a great hall. For three days the population of Moscow, marshalled according to occupations, had to file past the bier in the bitter cold of a Russian January. Then the body was handed over to the doctors and the chemists, who were at length able to find a means of embalming it which has proved successful down to the present day. In the Red Square, just outside the walls of the Kremlin, a fine mausoleum was erected (wood

to begin with, but replaced by marble in 1930); and here, in the central room, lie the remains of Lenin confined in glass and visible to all. Day and night the mausoleum is guarded by sentries with fixed bayonets, and every evening the Russian people can visit the hero's tomb. No one who is familiar with the Russian inclination towards mysticism can doubt the influence which this visible canonisation in the Red Square must exert upon the masses.

A bolshevik acquaintance told me the following characteristic tale. He was seated in his Moscow office one day when there appeared a peasant from the province of Ryazan, a man on whom he had been billeted some years before during the manœuvres of the Red Army. My informant was much surprised, for rarely does a Russian muzhik visit the distant capital. "What are you doing here, Nikolai Timofeevich?" asked my friend. "I wanted to see Vladimir Ilich [Lenin]." —"Is that why you have come all the way from Ryazan to Moscow?" —"Yes, for they have told me that Vladimir Ilich was so good a man that his body cannot rot." If you should talk to a Russian communist about such signal instances of the growth of a superstition, they will assure you that they themselves are greatly distressed by the extravagant developments of Lenin worship. Several years ago I was told of the intention to publish a pamphlet explaining the mystery of the embalming of the corpse in such terms as would be understood of the people, but, so far as I know, this promise has never been fulfilled.

The Lenin mausoleum is only accessible to a comparatively small proportion of Russian citizens. The part played by it in Moscow is taken over in the provinces by the Lenin altars. Throughout Russia, every official building, every place where a State or cooperative enterprise is carried on, has its Lenin corner; every schoolroom, every office, every shop, almost every shop window, has a picture or a bust of Lenin. The "Lenin corner" is a sort of private chapel wherever you may go in the bolshevik State. In the larger productive enterprises

a room is set apart, mostly opening out of the reading-room; in the smaller buildings it is literally nothing more than a corner, where you will see a statue of Lenin, laurel wreaths interspersed with red bunting, texts from Lenin on the walls, oil paintings with scenes from Lenin's life; and, hard by, pictures of the super-god Karl Marx and of the lesser saints Stalin, Molotoff, Voroshiloff, etc. In like manner, in workrooms and living-rooms, ikons and pictures of the tsar have to a great extent been replaced by pictures of Lenin and of Marx. Nor is this all. I do not know the precise number, but I am certain that in Soviet Russia there are at least fifty towns and villages which pass by the name of Lenin. Furthermore, there are innumerable Lenin monuments; every considerable village and every town has a Lenin Street; hundreds of factories and State commercial enterprises bear the name of the Red prophet.

Karl Marx, likewise, and, to a lesser extent, Friedrich Engels, have in bolshevik Russia been decked out as saints. In the course of the years since Lenin's death, the bolshevik Valhalla has come to shelter a fairly stable hierarchy, which takes the following form. The hirsute Marx is the bolshevik Allah or God the Father; Lenin is the arch-prophet or Redeemer; and the successors of Lenin are the "servants of the prophet". For a time it seemed as if N. K. Krupskaya, Lenin's widow, was to be adopted into communist mythology in the place, so to say, of the Madonna; but this movement has come to an end since the time when the prophet's widow espoused, for a space, the cause of the opposition, and had therefore to be accounted one of the enemies of Stalin. As far as the "servants of the prophet" are concerned, changes frequently occur. For instance, there is no longer any town which bears the name of Trotsky; no Trotsky pictures are to be seen in office rooms; you will not anywhere find a Trotsky Street; and to-day, no doubt, the Party is busy eliminating the names of Buharin, Rykoff, and Tomskey from the Red Legend. The cult of the demigods, the epigoni of Lenin is even more indicrous than the canonisation of the great founder

of the Party. A man needs an immense amount of "cheek" to be able, with a straight face, to walk past his own monument! Bismarck had more than once to suffer from this embarrassment—at Kissingen, for instance—and always found it an unpleasant ordeal. Apparently the heroes of bolshevism do not feel uneasy in such circumstances. Stalin, Trotsky, Kameneff, Zinovieff, and many others of them, have made no objection when towns have been named after them, or when for their glorification incense is burned which in other parts of the world is reserved for the mighty dead. They have allowed monuments to be erected in their honour while they are yet alive—perhaps because they lack faith in the likelihood that posterity will duly esteem them; perhaps because they believe that the masses must have some one to pray to.

#### 7. INTENSIFICATION OF THE WAR ON RELIGION

The bolsheviks' expectation that their own doctrine of salvation, in conjunction with the emptying of the vials of scorn upon the extant Churches and with the suppression of the higher religious organisations, would undermine the faith of the people, so that the darkness of Orthodoxy should yield place to the light of Marxism, has not been fulfilled, and has gone the way of so many of the other high hopes of the dawn of bolshevism. For about two years, there has been noticeable an intensification of the war on religion. It is still regarded as inadvisable to prohibit in plain terms an avowal of religious faith or the observance of Church ritual. Nonetheless there has been an organised campaign against the whole ecclesiastical structure. This takes the form of a demolition of church buildings. At first the tearing down of numerous churches was justified on the ground that they were hindrances to traffic or were hopelessly out of repair. Next the authorities went on to raze churches where no such reason was adducible—this being done in Moscow as well as elsewhere. In the summer of 1929, without notice, a gang of workmen came to



the famous chapel of the Iberian Mother of God, removed the contents to various museums, and demolished the place within a few hours. This was a frank admission of the ineffectiveness of the antireligious campaign, for the Iberian chapel had continued to be visited by large congregations, although opposite it, on the Second Moscow Soviet House, for more than ten years there has flaunted a stone tablet bearing Karl Marx's famous catchword: "Religion is the opium of the people". In the provinces during the last two or three years, many churches, synagogues, and mosques have been taken over as club-houses for communists or workers in the co-operative movement, while others have been converted into garages, workshops, and so on.

Side by side with this war on church buildings, there has gone on an intensified propaganda against religious festivals, above all against Easter and Christmas. We can understand the bolshevik attitude in this matter, for at these leading festivals the churches have always been packed to overflowing, thus giving the lie to the contention that none but old women and bigots continue to cling to the Orthodox doctrine. As late as Easter 1928 I saw in the churches, not only men of all ages, but actually Red soldiers in full uniform, holding Easter candles and Easter cakes. Such a thing is no longer conceivable. In order to destroy the "Easter mood", the leaders of the antireligious campaign have employed the most diversified means. For example, at Easter 1929 all the theatres were instructed to give performances during the night of the R surrection and both matin es and evening performances on the first day of the holidays. The beginning of the evening performances was postponed from eight o'clock until ten, so that the players and the audience might be freed from the temptation of going to church after the theatre. When some of the theatres, and among them the State opera house in Moscow, sabotaged this decree by playing very short pieces at lightning speed, a tremendous clamour was raised in the bolshevik press, and criminal prosecutions were demanded.

The seats were sold in block to the trade unions, which were instructed to compel their members to take tickets. After the performance there was in all the theatres to be an "anti-religious evening" organised for the express purpose of keeping the audience until the morning was well advanced. In addition, the leaders of the antireligious campaign gave entertainments in the clubs and other public buildings; and in the great squares of the town there were concerts, cinema shows, and "carnivals".

Another means to the same end has been the imitation of Church customs. For instance, on Christmas Eve the school-children are summoned to a Christmas tree, which differs from the traditional one only in these respects, that the fir-tree is decked with red ribbons instead of with silver ones, that International and Young Communist songs are sung instead of Christmas hymns, and that the gifts hung on the tree have a political character. These bolshevik Christmas festivals bear the name of "Red Fir-tree". An especially amusing innovation in this field is that of the Red christening! Upon the request of the parents, the newborn infant is, at the communist club, formally received into the fellowship of the Red faith. The chairman of the Party nucleus, acting as "godfather", delivers an impassioned address concerning the new member of the Workers' and Peasants' Republic, the parents are given presents, and the baby is named "Octoberling", i.e. a child of the October [November] revolution. Furthermore, just as the Party greets the human being on the threshold of life, so does it bid farewell to deceased persons, even when these have not been inscribed as members. Daily in Moscow one encounters funeral processions headed by the banner of the trade union or of the nucleus, and with a Red Army band marching behind the coffin.

This monkeyish imitation of religious usages, this bolshevisation of Christian ritual, is distressing to the foreign observer. Even more pitiful is the spiritual impotence of the bolsheviks in the petty struggles of the antireligious campaign. Shortly

before Christmas 1928, the Soviet press began to raise a clamour against Christmas displays in State and private business houses, although these were merely taking the form of decorated fir-trees and Father-Christmas figures, no one venturing to exhibit religious insignia. "Grandfather Frost" (such is the Russian name of Father Christmas) was day after day a target for the scorn of Party journalists, until he had been replaced by images of Red soldiers, pictures of Lenin in childhood, and other emblems of the new doctrine of salvation. Year after year, too, the Red press rails against the cutting-down of young fir-trees for use as Christmas trees, declaring this to be a "serious menace to the welfare of Russian forestry". Year after year the Moscow Soviet has passed a vigorous resolution forbidding the trade in Christmas trees, but has never been able to enforce the decree. Submissive though the populace is in general to police regulations, in this matter it is stubborn. Noted bolsheviks, such as Semashko, sometime people's commissary for health, deliver themselves as follows in the attempt to put an end to Christmas observances: "Religion and vodka join hands in the attack on enlightenment." Again: "There can be no question but that the keeping of Christmas encourages the revival of rowdyism." On the Moscow trams was posted the legend: "Religion is poison. Don't poison your children!" In December 1928, one of the Moscow district committees of the Bolshevik Party inaugurated an "antireligious university" which was on Sundays to train militant atheists. Lectures by Lunacharsky, Semashko, and Ryazanoff were announced. In October 1929, the Moscow Trades Council decided to found nine "universities" devoted exclusively to promoting antireligious enlightenment. The trade unions of the capital were asked to set aside part of their educational funds for the equipment of these new "universities". A leading centre for the pouring of contempt on religion is the Antireligious Museum, established in 1929 at the sometime Church of the Venerable Strastnoy Monastery, in the heart of the capital.

## 8. THE ATHEISTIC CALENDAR

Now that the failure of the attempts hitherto made to eradicate religion has become plain, the leaders of the antireligious war find themselves faced with the alternatives of capitulating to the Churches or frankly destroying them. The latter policy would imply closing of all places of worship and declaring the practice of religion a criminal offence. I doubt if any effective resistance to the suppression of religion would be made, and, since the bolsheviks obviously shrink from so extreme a step, this must be because they fear that the outside world would interpret such action as signifying the final abolition of the last vestiges of individual freedom in the Soviet State. Being on the horns of this dilemma, the Bolshevik Party has had recourse to an ingenious artifice—the abolition of the seven-day week. On August 26, 1929, the Council of People's Commissaries published a decree inaugurating a continuous working week, and therewith abolishing Sunday and all other religious festivals. Since October 1, 1929, the continuous working week has been in force in the administrative offices and in the Party bureaus as well as in industry. There remain five universal public holidays, all of them revolutionary festivals or commemorations: January 22nd, in honour of Red Sunday (1905); May 1st and 2nd, as part of the international celebrations on those dates; and November 7th and 8th, reminiscent of the bolshevik revolution. On all the other 360 days in the year, throughout the vast realm, by the will of the legislators the motors hum, the belts turn, the lorries thunder along, the typewriters clatter unceasingly. Every day without pause, four-fifths of the Russian people are at work, while the remaining fifth keeps holiday. I need not expatiate as to the effect this five-day-week mania has upon the popular imagination. Think what it would mean in Germany or England if there were never a Sunday; if the father of the family were to have his holiday on a day when the son had to go to the factory at dawn and to return tired and work-

soiled in the evening; if the daughter were never to have a day off except when her mother was going out to work as a charwoman. Picture to yourself these holidays which come day by day to one-fifth of the population when all the others are toiling, so that there can be no atmosphere of general repose. Picture to yourself the schoolrooms, never empty. No very vigorous exercise of fancy is needed to see that this change in the calendar transforms the world into a joyless house of servitude. But from the bolshevik outlook the uninterrupted working year is a brilliant invention. It destroys family life, which was the basis of the old society; it hunts the unlucky holiday-makers into the Soviet clubs, which are always open; and (best of all) it annihilates Sunday in the religious sense of the term. Even though those workers whose one day's holiday in five happens to fall on a Sunday can, if they like, attend the almost empty churches—the works' managements will see to it that none of the workers who still adhere to "religious superstitions" shall venture to neglect their tasks for the sake of Christian ritual.

Christmas 1929 and Easter 1930 were the first of the great Church festivals to come round after the inauguration of the new calendar. By threats of instant dismissal and of criminal proceedings the authorities were able to ensure that these religious feasts should no longer make any mark in the public life of the towns. The prohibition of Christmas trees was also for the first time made effective. Christmas, Easter, Sunday, a general weekly holiday—these have ceased to exist in Russia.

### 9. PERSECUTION OF PRIESTS

Hand in hand with broadly conceived preventive measures, there has, since the beginning of 1929, been an intensified political persecution of priests of all creeds and of the members of the various sects. Since in this matter the authorities are reluctant to call a spade a spade and to admit that they are persecuting religion simply because it is religion,

the arrests and the shootings of priests and believers are effected under one political pretext or another. In the case of the Catholic clergy the reason usually adduced is that the offenders are spies in the Polish service; Protestant pastors are charged with inciting to a tax strike and with similar offences; active sectaries are said to be bandits; the Orthodox are accused of campaigning against Soviet and Party officials. I must frankly admit the possibility that in some instances these charges are well grounded; but there can be no doubt that the present persecution of the clergy, just like the recent intensification of Soviet criminal procedure, is the expression of an organised campaign. The Church as such is an enemy; and the particular political misdemeanours of the priests and the faithful are of minor importance.

The savage religious war of the year 1930 attracted widespread attention across the Russian frontier, and aroused a defensive reaction in all the Churches of Europe and America. This repercussion was extremely distasteful to the Soviet government. Its first idea was flat denial, to begin with on the part of members of the government, and then (when such official repudiation was unavailing) through declarations extorted from high dignitaries of the Orthodox Church. In February 1930, the Russian primate, Sergius the metropolitan, was induced to say that absolute freedom of faith and worship prevailed in Russia, and that assertions to the contrary were inventions of the Roman pontiff and of other foes of the Soviet authorities. Since incredulous foreigners were unimpressed, the bolsheviks arranged that Sergius should be "interviewed" by the Moscow correspondents of the western press. In the presence of Soviet representatives, the poor old fellow handed the journalists a ready-made document, but stubbornly refused to answer any questions. The Party carried through a similar piece of humbug at about the same date in the case of the Ukrainian territorial Church, which was formally dissolved by a "resolution" of its own congress.

To sum up, the bolshevik campaign against religion and

the Churches, begun in the twelfth year of Soviet rule, is an open admission that the recruiting energy of the Red philosophy has expired. What we are witnessing is no mere manifestation of impatience at the slowness with which the minds of the peoples of the Russian realm are being bolshevised, nor yet is it a taking-up of arms against actual dangers; it is an attempt to use the physical powers of the State for the eradication of what is regarded as an undesirable mentality. True that in March 1930 the antireligious campaign was slackened in many of the country districts, but on broad lines the movement is still in operation.

*BOOK THREE*

TRAINING OF THE MASS-MAN





## CHAPTER NINE

### THE STATE AND THE FAMILY

#### I. THE RELIGIOUS CITIZEN

THE ideal of Christian humility, upon which the Greco-Russian Church has always been wont to insist, did the tsarist police good service in their attempts to check the spread of the spirit of revolution, and helped to tame the anarchistic instincts of the Russians. The Russian believer, at any rate in the lower strata of the population, has, as part of his Christian faith, a conviction that it behoves him to obey the secular authorities. Presumably the more intelligent members of the autocracy, when promoting the spread of Orthodoxy, were guided by prudential considerations as well as by zeal for the faith. They must have realised the political significance of the innumerable church towers that rise skyward athwart the unbroken dullness of the Russian countryside, must have been well aware that these were props of their own power. The Marxian catchword, "religion is the opium of the people", is false as far as concerns the European West—where the Church is so often in open or tacit opposition to the State, and is unquestionably never so interlinked with the State as it was in Old Russia. There, at least, the maxim was valid.

The bolsheviks' cult of "divine right", which is peculiarly conspicuous in the form of Lenin-worship, is but an application of experience gained under the rule of the tsars. The Red State is profiting by tsarist example. It would, of course, be absurd to deny that the fathers of bolshevism cherished an ideal of the collective or mass-man, and that their disciples and theoreticians still cherish that ideal to-day; but there is even less warrant for doubting that the bolsheviks, when thinking of the mass-man, have simultaneously thought of him as an ideal subject, as the best possible material for

government (their government) to work upon. Their insistence upon all forms of collective life, the press-gangs that recruit for the mass organisations—what are these to a dispassionate eye but fresh evidence of a “doping” policy, of a resolve to safeguard the individual against the risk of thinking for himself and of guiding his life in accordance with the dictates of his own private inclinations. Now that the Red doctrine has proved unable to go on winning recruits by moral suasion, the bolsheviks are turning with redoubled energy to an endeavour to constrain underlings to become members of the Soviet horde, in which there is no scope for individuality.

## 2. FAMILY FEELING AS A CONSERVATIVE FORCE

Next to the Church, the strongest bulwark of the old way of living is the Russian family. Prior to the revolution, family feeling was much stronger in Russia than in the European West. Although the Russians did not, like the middle-class Germans, make a sort of idyllic cult of the family, the ties of blood-relationship (however remote) were extremely strong, and became especially manifest when any member of the family was in trouble. Aunts, cousins, and nieces, who in Germany are a little outside the picture of the family, are in Russia an essential part of that picture. Thus the Russian family, if less of a “herd” than in the West, was in the truer sense of the term an extended “family”, this being characteristic of all the Slav nationalities. Hence nepotism has ever been typical of Russia—and, for all that the Party leaders can do to counteract it, remains typical under the bolshevik regime.

The family feeling of these extended Russian families has its drawbacks from the bolshevik standpoint, for it hinders the exercise of economic pressure upon “personæ ingratae”, who are given pecuniary help by more prosperous members of the clan. Yet as an aid to collectivisation it might be useful, above all if it could be transferred from the family proper to the “working family”—the personnel of an economic

enterprise, or a group living under one roof. On the whole, however, family feeling, though it lacks a firm biological foundation, is an obstacle in the way of the training of the mass-man. That is why the bolsheviks have always emptied the vials of their scorn upon family life, making fun of its every manifestation.

In point of theory they have contraposed to the family ideal that of the socialist community of those who dwell under the same roof and feed at the same board. There were instances of the sort even under the old regime—and terrible instances they were. I am thinking of the horrible barracks in which some of the Russian factory owners housed their workers, places with a room for each family and a communal kitchen, distinguishable only from military barracks by being dirtier and uglier. Some of these dreadful places are still tenanted, and seem all the more abominable because side by side with them the Red factory owner of the new time—the Soviet State—has built excellent club-houses. But even under bolshevik impetus, attempts to establish community life have completely failed. Although the housing shortage would seem to call imperiously for the institution, the Russian proletariat (to say nothing of the peasantry and the intelligentsia) is a hundred per cent refractory to communism in that sense of the term. I have visited a very large number of proletarian dwellings in Russia, without finding a single one where the families herded together in a big building designed for communal life could be persuaded even to use the communal kitchen. The “individualist” spirit-lamps to be found in every Russian kitchen, and the red-brick stoves on the wooden floors of the living-rooms, bear eloquent testimony against the utopian socialist idea that the masses will voluntarily renounce an individualist way of living.

The only communal dwelling-houses in Soviet Russia to-day are those for unmarried factory workers, for student groups, and for the workers in the newest State enterprises—these being all of them domains in which the government can

ruthlessly exercise its dictatorial powers. Naturally the most "advanced" in respect of communal life are the dwelling-houses which are exclusively reserved for members of the Party. Still, even in these bolshevik habitations you will rarely fail to discover primus stoves, spirit-lamps, etc., and in everyday life my communist acquaintances rebelled against the collectivist ideal whenever they could. One would, at Easter, very secretly bake Easter cakes for his children and would tint Easter eggs for them; another, though he had but one room in a Party tenement house, joined with the married couple who were his nearest neighbours in hiring a maid-servant; a third, though he ate his principal meals in the communal dining-room, got his wife to cook for him in his own quarters the dishes most after his heart. Examine Trotsky's memoirs carefully and, reading between the lines, you will see that even the bolshevik leaders—modestly though they live—cannot shake off the little preferences and peculiarities whose indulgence is only possible in family life, since they are incompatible with communism in the sense we are now considering.

Bolshevik propagandists assure the world that in the Soviet State woman has been freed from the cares of the household, so that she is as well able as are her husband and her children to give herself up to cultural enjoyments. This is a fable. In actual fact, the bolsheviks, who have unrestricted control of domestic architecture in contemporary Russia, rarely build communal dwellings, but erect everywhere tenement houses after the western model, one-room and two-room flats with private kitchens. Each of these habitations is self-contained, completely shut off from the others. This does not signify a delicate consideration for the conservative leanings of the proletariat, but is the outcome of capitulation before invincible resistance. So general is the phenomenon that the recent opening of a few model collective dwellings really counts for nothing.

## 3. BOLSHEVIK FATHERS

The bolshevik campaign against the family obviously lacks sincerity, inasmuch as the majority of Russian communists are far from being inclined to renounce marriage and family life. Here, as in so many other fields, Soviet theory and practice are in sharp conflict. Let me give an amusing instance of this conflict. On a train journey in Siberia I was sitting opposite a Young Communist, a provincial, who (after the Russian manner) talked politics to me for about twenty-four hours almost without pause. A considerable proportion of this rather exhausting harangue was devoted to denouncing the institution of marriage. My interlocutor was an enthusiastic champion of free love, supporting it by arguments some of which were anticapitalist and others biological. Any thought of "owning" a woman was the outcome of bourgeois prejudice and implied a restraint of the woman's freedom; monogamy was unnatural and diminished the sum-total of pleasure; and so on, and so forth. The objections I ventured to raise were brushed aside with the aid of Marxian dialectic. In the end I ceased to argue with the fanatic. Imagine, then, my astonishment when, shortly before we reached our destination, he said with a contented smile:

"We shall be in Irkutsk in a few minutes. I do hope my wife will be at the station."

"What? Your wife? You are married, then?"

"Oh, yes. I've been married five years, and we've two strapping boys. The elder, writes my wife, keeps on asking for Father."

"Look here, my friend, how on earth do you square your family happiness with your revolutionary views concerning love and marriage?"

"Readily enough. I grew up under the old system, and became imbued with its prejudices and erroneous ideals. I love my wife, am faithful to her on the whole, and I am devoted to my children. But the next generation will be quit

of all these bourgeois sentimentalisms—just as it will have lost the taste for vodka.”

Such an outlook is typical of the bolsheviks, though it rarely finds so frank an expression. Above all is it typical of the leaders and of the Party intellectuals, many of whom are Jews, with the result that the strong family feeling of the Hebrew race has had due effect. It is not too much to say that to lead a well-ordered family life is a part of “good form” among the bolshevik chiefs. Sexual libertinage is frowned on in these circles; and even the liaisons of some of the Soviet notables with ballet dancers and actresses tend (strange as this may seem to foreigners) to assume a somewhat philistine and durable character. Another example will drive this point home. In 1926 a Russian whom I will call M, the secretary of an American journalist, was arrested and was deported to the Solovetsky Islands in the Arctic Ocean. Since we foreign pressmen did not believe that he could have committed any serious offence, we made common cause on his behalf, entering a remonstrance which was taken very much amiss by the “competent authorities”. The official with whom we were chiefly concerned, a committee member in the People’s Commissariat for Foreign Affairs, professed himself so much outraged as to be unable even to discuss the matter with us. However, when we had occasion to see him about something else, one of us ventured to grasp the opportunity and to ask why M had been arrested and deported. R answered indignantly: “I simply cannot understand why you should intercede on behalf of M, who had an intrigue with a woman although he is a married man with two children!” We could not doubt that R, a bolshevik of the Old Guard and a man whose own family life was beyond reproach, was perfectly sincere in his anger.

#### 4. IMMORALITY OF THE YOUNG

Things are very different, however, among the communist youth, in whom sexual enlightenment” may be said, almost

without exaggeration, to have degenerated into libertinage. Coeducation, as a part of which in Russia lads and girls live together under the same roof in children's homes and the dwelling-houses for young folk, has not produced the satisfactory results that were expected by many sexual reformers. Among all the countries in our part of the world, Russia certainly enjoys an unenviable pre-eminence in respect of the percentage of girls who become pregnant between the ages of twelve and fifteen. I am not thinking now of the terrible conditions that obtain among shelterless and vagrant children, who are utterly corrupt morally and sexually. Altogether apart from this, the deliberate cultivation of "amorality" in the bolshevik younger generation has gone far to expel the notion of love from the relationships between the sexes, and to result in their being regarded as exclusively corporeal in nature. For these young people, sex has physiology but no psychology. Antibolshevik propagandists exaggerate when they declare that the girls are common property; but none the less it attracts unfavourable comment in Young Communist circles if a girl should show herself reluctant to gratify the sexual longings of her male comrades. This matter has been amply discussed in Soviet literature, the general conclusion being that "love" is a bourgeois atavism with which the younger generation can have no concern; and communist young women in revolt against being merely "used" for the gratification of male passion are not merely blamed but derided. These young-bolshevik theories have exceedingly concrete results in the form of countless pregnancies, which in turn lead to innumerable artificially induced abortions with disastrous consequences to health. In the circles we are now considering it is by no means unusual for a girl to have abortion procured several times in a year. Furthermore, sexual orgies and sexual crimes (mass-rape, for instance) are reported too often in the Soviet press to be dismissed lightly as apocryphal. It is true that the Party discountenances hooliganism, but the existence of a considerable number of Young Communist hooligans (whose



undesirable activities are not restricted to the sphere of sex) is a direct outcome of the communist policy towards youth.

If the effects of the new cult of "amorality" are as yet less disastrous and less widespread than might have been expected, this is because the Russians have greater reserves of healthy energy than exist to-day in any of the lands of the European West. We have to remember too, that the New Youth comprises only a thin stratum of the population. Nor, when we are contemplating Soviet Russia, must we forget a kindred sexual ferment that is at work among the younger generation of our own western towns. There, likewise, we find an abundance of young people who take an extremely prosaic, unromantic, strictly physiological, and therefore amoral view of sex relations. Happily there is good reason to suppose that this trend is already on the wane.

#### 5. LACK OF HOUSING ACCOMMODATION

The Party has not yet renounced the aim of destroying marriage and the family. Its best ally in this campaign against the will of the people is the lack of housing accommodation, a shortage so terrible (especially in Moscow) that in comparison therewith even the disastrous housing conditions of latter-day Germany seem almost ideal. According to a cautious estimate there would appear to be in the capital four families for every three rooms. This means that one family per room must be the prevailing rule, and that there must much more often be two families in a room than two-room tenements for single families. As for three rooms per family, this must be a rarity indeed. To grasp the discomfort, nay the misery, thus involved, the reader must bear in mind that even among the more recently built houses only a very small fraction has been planned on the one-room tenement system. The great majority of town-dwelling Russians live higgledy-piggledy in the old-style houses containing a number of rooms and built for

the accommodation of one family. The condition of such houses, socialised and grossly overpopulated, begs a description. Although the bolsheviks have devoted large sums to the erection of dwelling-houses, the shortage increases year by year. Besides, the new buildings are peopled by Soviet officials and other employees, rather than by ordinary workers. The average floor-space per head had in 1929 sunk to 52 square feet, not much more than the room occupied by one double bed.

The Russian urban dwelling of to-day is no longer a home. Only for the lowest strata of the population, for persons who were accustomed to living under such conditions in the old days, is it anything more than a lair. All the others waste their time and outweary their nervous systems in the vain attempt to escape the discomforts of an unduly crowded life in common with its inevitable quarrels—of an existence in which the orderly are molested by the disorderly, the civilised by the uncivilised, the healthy by the sick, and those who would fain lead quiet lives by the rowdy. Volumes could be filled with the description of the daily tragedy of Russian town life under such conditions during the last twelve years. A western European reader can form some sort of idea of the miseries of such an existence if he imagines those attendant upon billeting, protracted indefinitely and multiplied a hundredfold. No doubt the Russian in these matters is more tolerant than the European; but, on the other hand, he is too maladroit and too phlegmatic to make the best use of the forty or fifty square feet allotted to him as a "habitation". Only a certain proportion of those who used to be well-to-do have been able, often in a very touching way, to adapt themselves to circumstances so as to preserve a modicum of home comfort. How the great majority are housed in contemporary Russia can easily be learned by a visitor who wanders through the streets at nightfall and peeps through the windows (mostly uncurtained) of the ground-floor and basement rooms. It would never do to allow the chiefs of our urban housing department to travel

in Russia, for if they did so they would probably come to the conclusion that housing conditions in Germany are all that could be desired!

Still, the Russian workers have one consolation, for rents are graduated in accordance with income, and usually very little is paid for the scanty accommodation. The difference between Russian and German house rents becomes less conspicuous, indeed, when we work them out at so much per foot of inhabited floor space, seeing that the rents do not merely increase proportionally with the tenant's income, but also proportionally with the size of the inhabited area. All the same, I regard the graduation of rents in accordance with income as an enviable system, seeing that (in view of the enormous importance of housing conditions for the general welfare) the part played by rent in the budget of the German proletarian is extremely high. There are, however, many difficulties in the way of the graduation of rent according to income under a capitalist system of house-owning. On the other hand the Soviet government has not yet shown itself able to improvise a reasonable housing economy under the conditions it has brought into being in Russia. Indeed, the condition of the communalised houses is deplorable, and when a tenant complains of the state of disrepair he always gets the same answer that the rent paid does not suffice to keep the dwelling in proper condition. It is significant that the Soviet housing authorities are always delighted when they have to provide for a foreigner who has no legal right to housing accommodation, and can therefore be charged an enormous rent. I myself in Moscow lived with my family in a flat containing three rooms and three little dressing-rooms, paying a monthly rent of 300 roubles. Under the same roof lived one of my colleagues whose rent was even higher. The two of us paid as much as all the other fifty tenants in the building put together.

## 6. "LIBERATED" WOMAN

I need hardly say that women suffer more than men in consequence of the housing shortage in contemporary Russia. The "liberation of woman from the slavery of housework" has been realised in a very strange and undesirable fashion. In a Soviet proletarian household there is little housework to do—because of the lack of space! For this reason the Russian townswoman can devote herself mainly to her occupational and social interests—the "social" interests being those conceived as such by the Party. Scant difference is made between sexes in the allotting of work, so that for practical purposes in Soviet Russia to-day women are engaged in all the occupations which in western Europe they had perforce to undertake in war-time. The advocates of the unqualified emancipation of women will find Soviet Russian conditions ideal in this respect, especially when they are told that working women in Russia enjoy a very full measure of protection for their health.

As far as theory goes, the Soviet laws for the safeguarding of women and motherhood are unquestionably excellent, so I shall give a brief sketch of them here. Women and girls engaged in manual occupations are released from these for eight weeks before and after childbirth, while the unoccupied spell in the case of women who are mental workers or office workers is six weeks before and after childbirth. Women who suckle their children are granted suitable pauses in their occupation to provide for the necessities of the case. Women about to become mothers and those who are giving suck are not allowed to engage in night work; but, strangely enough, there is no general prohibition of night work for women. The measures for the protection of mothers and children are effectively amplified by the provision of kindergartens, many of them hard by the factories, in which infants in arms can also be left. As far as I have been able to observe, these arrangements are widespread, and are carried out in exemplary fashion. Whenever it is really necessary that women, and especially

women about to become mothers and women who are giving suck, should engage in a wage-earning occupation, western countries would do well to imitate Russian social legislation in these matters. To some extent, indeed, such measures have been legally enforced in Germany for more than twenty years, and a further advance was made by the legislation of the year 1927. Still, I have absolutely no sympathy with the bolshevik ideal that there should be complete equality between women and men in occupational life—an ideal to which frank expression is given in the Soviet labour code. In my opinion a proletarian State which aims at a general reduction of the hours of labour and of the burden of occupational toil should, as one of its first aims, try to set women free for the tasks which, since the dawn of human history, have always been regarded as pre-eminently "feminine", and will be so regarded until the end of time, namely the upbringing of healthy children, the cares of the household, and (generally speaking) the improvement of the domestic entourage in which human beings have to live when their daily work is done. I find myself quite unable to share the enthusiasm of the bolsheviks because an increasing number of women are working at the bench, are driving trams, mining coal, standing on the footplates of locomotives.

The Party is eager to assure the world that women also play a great part in the political life of the Soviet State. In the early days of the revolution this was true. Such women as Vera Figner, Alexandra Kollontay, and Larissa Reissner did good service to the revolution in those days of storm and stress, both in the way of providing impetus and in the way of active work. In the lower levels of the Soviet hierarchy there are still plenty of women in fairly conspicuous positions; but the higher we rise in that hierarchy, the nearer we approach to the real centres of power of the Red State, the less conspicuous becomes the feminine element. In the People's Commissariats, in the Central Committee, and in the Central Control Commission, there is not so much as one woman.

The ruling force of the Party is one hundred per cent masculine—Italy being the only modern State (France perhaps excepted) in which women are so effectively excluded from political roles.

That is the hard fact in contemporary Russia, all talk of the "emancipation of women" notwithstanding.

### 7. RED CLUBS

The bolsheviks regard the housing shortage with mixed feelings. On the one hand they would gladly reduce it, seeing that it contrasts so strongly with the promise of the revolution and is a persistent source of discontent. On the other hand overcrowding undermines family feeling and drives people to the places where they can find more rest and comfort—to the clubs where they are accessible to mass influence and mass education. I do not mean to imply that these considerations are deliberately balanced one against the other or openly discussed in the Party. All I desire to point out is that very large sums of money are devoted to the building of clubs although, in existing circumstances, they might much better be spent upon the erection of new dwelling-houses—if the welfare of the people were the sole aim of the authorities. No European statesman would dare to construct luxurious centres of entertainment and pleasure when, close beside them, the very persons for whom such places are intended were living under the most abominable conditions. In the post-war years, when the German municipal authorities undertook works of public utility on a considerable scale, they were accused of extravagance. Yet these public baths, elementary schools, electric fire-stations, communal gardens, and the like, served essential needs; and, at the same time, in the great cities of Germany ten times as many dwelling-houses were being built as in Soviet Russia—although in the former only by capitalist entrepreneurs. A European, familiar with the way in which habitations are sprouting from the ground in our great cities, must be struck with blindness if he is impressed

by the few freshly constructed edifices to be found in the great towns of Russia. The money spent by the bolsheviks upon the provision of housing accommodation and upon the laying out of public parks, etc., is a trifle in comparison with the expenditure upon clubs which, from the nature of the case, can satisfy only a small proportion of the natural needs of the population. As a meeting-house, as a centre of sport and gymnastics, and even as a theatre and a cinema, a club may certainly be of public utility; but the true function of these clubs, as their programme shows beyond a shadow of doubt, is to exert a political influence upon the masses, to keep them in leading-strings and under observation outside their working hours. "In the Soviet Union, the club is one of the most powerful means for political, educational, and cultural work among the masses." This quotation from the popular Soviet Encyclopedia issued by the Prometheus publishing house of Moscow in the year 1929, shows clearly that the bolshevik club system, so enormously developed, is one of the main weapons in the struggle to collectivise the masses. The welfare activities of the clubs upon which so much stress is laid by the Soviet authorities when they hold converse with foreigners, are, so to say, "leading articles" to attract and to allure.

In the Donetz coalfield, amid the dilapidated working-class dwellings which look little better than nigger kraals, I have seen club palaces far more sumptuous than anything to be found in Berlin. In Novo-Sibirsk, a rising place, the capital of Siberia, when I visited it in the autumn of 1926, several such palaces were in course of construction at the time when only four big habitations (the first of their kind) were being erected. I have already spoken of a small textile village near Moscow. Here the workers were housed in the most detestable barracks, though close at hand a huge club-house and theatre had been built. Such examples could be indefinitely multiplied. The money spent in building and in running these clubs in contemporary Russia would have served to provide or to renovate decent habitations for hundreds of thousands of

Russian proletarians. Let me repeat that when I make this criticism I am not thinking of those new buildings which really meet a public want, such as the Moscow Cultural and Recreational Park and similar places of refreshment and entertainment in the great cities of Russia. I gladly acknowledge all that the Soviet authorities have done in the way of providing public parks, playgrounds, and places for athletic sports. It would be petty to regard such institutions as mere expressions of the struggle against the family or as instruments of propaganda. But (for instance) the huge Red Army Club which flaunts itself in Moscow produces upon an unprejudiced foreigner the impression that it makes mock of the miseries of all those who are housed in the adjoining slums.

The bolsheviks are fond of assuring us that such symbols of revolutionary luxury cannot possibly arouse a sense of envy in the masses because they are communal property. The man in the street can say proudly to himself: "That is my club!" There is some truth in the contention, as also in the assertion that in contemporary Russia poverty is more bearable than it was in the realm of the tsars or than it is in capitalist States—because poverty is universal. On the whole, however, the argument is invalid, partly because it is grounded upon the base instincts of envy and jealousy, and partly because it is only used for propaganda purposes, and is not the reasoning of statesmen equipped with a due sense of responsibility.



## CHAPTER TEN

### THE FIGHT FOR THE RISING GENERATION

#### 1. FOOD-PROVIDERS, NOT PARENTS

THE most suitable material for the training of the Socialist mass-man, the only material that is suitable in the long run, is the younger generation. He who controls the young, controls the future. With the energy that is typical of them, the bolsheviks have drawn conclusions from this maxim. The campaign for the shaping of the minds of children goes hand in hand with the campaign against the family. The bolshevik ideal is to bring up the new generation in State homes for children and young people, who are to be definitively separated from their parents as soon as possible after birth. If this radical measure for the production of a mass-man who will be absolutely faithful to the extant regime has not up to now been applied on a large scale in the Soviet realm, that is only because hitherto the State has lacked the necessary financial resources. There is still a place for parents, though only as food-providers. That, presumably, is the main reason why the official registration of marriage has been continued, as the best means, in existing circumstances, of ensuring that children and the unemployed shall be fed.

In Soviet Russia, parents are responsible to the State for the bodily welfare of their children, but have no spiritual or moral right to control them. Parental authority is only tolerated insofar as it does not take the form of an "oppression" of the child. When disputes arise, the child can almost always get the better of the parents provided it is shrewd enough to describe the latter as "reactionary". Corporal punishment of a child by a parent, even a trifling box on the ear, is legally punishable—and is often legally punished.

Every Russian townsman will be able to tell you of cases coming within the range of his own experience in which children have managed to get their parents imprisoned because the latter have tried to exercise parental authority. The inferior status of parents as compared with children finds expression in the official regulations for the management of Soviet schools. In the school council, which has the last word upon all the important problems of school life, there are representatives of the Soviet authorities, of the trade unions, of the Party organisations, and of the pupils—but no representatives of the parents. True, there are parents' meetings, summoned and presided over by the headmaster of the school, but they are concerned only with such matters as the providing of hot breakfasts, tea, etc.; and with ways and means for carrying on the new educational system in the home as well as in the school!

## 2. THE PUPIL IS MASTER

The organisation of school councils or soviets (which took place here and there in the German revolution likewise) has in the Soviet community developed into a comprehensive educational system. The school corporation and the bolshevik League of Youth are to-day Soviet republics in miniature, self-governing bodies, whereas adults—the teachers—are regarded only as advisers. The children's soviets appoint a number of sub-committees, and in almost all the affairs of the school the youngsters have the last word. They pass judgment upon their teachers, praise them or blame them as the case may be, spur them on to greater exertions; they control the school finances and decide upon hygienic regulations; they communicate by letter and by word of mouth with public institutions of various kinds; they send authoritative delegations to their parents' houses and to industrial enterprises. Only to the Party organisations are they subservient—and there comes the limit of this "democracy in the schools".

In the last resort the pupils are held in leading-strings by the Young Communist organisations.

The lengths to which this soviet system goes in the schools may be made plain by the following example. In the winter of 1925-1926 there appeared one day at all the great theatres of Moscow shortly before the hour fixed for the performance, whipper-snappers of eight, ten, or twelve years old, declaring themselves to be the "theatre committee" of their schools, and demanding an interview with the management. In any other country the youthful delegates would have been dismissed with Homeric laughter, but the Moscow theatre managers thought it expedient to take them seriously, entertain them with tea and cakes, and answer all the questions propounded by the little examiners. These questions related to the number of Party members engaged at the theatre, the wages of the actors and actresses and of the staff, the hygienic arrangements, and so on. At two of the theatres, where the management was refractory and did not woo the favour of the visiting "committee", there was trouble afterwards with the Party and the educational authorities because a complaint was lodged by the saucy youngsters.

Inasmuch as the Soviet youth, as contrasted with grown-up Russians, regards the infallibility and divine right of the Party as a matter of course, children and adolescents are not galled by the Red chain, and have from their earliest years an inordinate self-confidence. Fawning upon elders is as rare as respect for parents. Soviet schools, therefore, have a lively though somewhat presumptuous tone; and it is refreshing at times to hear a little bolshevik of ten or twelve embarrassing his teacher by his frank and rather cheeky questions and answers. The most striking fact about this educational system is that, with its unexampled positiveness and onesidedness, it leaves in the minds of the young no room for a shadow of doubt as to the superexcellence of the Soviet environment. When we remember that the Russian who is twenty to-day has no effective memories of the old regime, and that all these

adolescents see the world exclusively through Red spectacles, we can realise what a powerful fighting force on behalf of bolshevism is the younger generation of Soviet Russia.

### 3. "POLITGRAMOTA"

Russian education, like every vital manifestation of the bolshevik State, is permeated with politics. Article 1 of the regulations for Soviet schools discloses their purpose in the following plain terms: "The object of the Soviet school is to train the rising generation in the spirit of communism in order to make its members active participators in the upbuilding of socialism and in the class struggle of the international proletariat." Article 2 of the regulations, which expounds this aim in fuller detail, is a word for word quotation from the programme of the Bolshevik Party. It is just as well for the reader to form a clear idea of the purposes of the Soviet school, inasmuch as bolshevik propaganda in foreign lands keeps this matter in the background, and endeavours to give the impression that Soviet educational policy is governed by the desire to impart unbiassed instruction. The actual fact is that "Politgramota", that is to say, elementary political instruction, is not merely an important branch in school studies, but permeates the other branches, ranging from the A B C of the lowest class to the higher mathematics taught in the universities. In every spelling book you will find a picture of Lenin, a print of the Soviet arms (the hammer and the sickle) and of the Soviet star, notes regarding revolutionary festivals and political demonstrations for children, readings about May-day and Red October (November). Politgramota runs like a red thread through all the topics in every school book. As for what is called "social instruction", an amalgam of history and civics, this is a pure culture of the Red doctrine. The table of contents of the reading-book used in elementary schools (see Appendix VIII) speaks for itself. For the middle schools there is a reading course in four volumes, called *Text-book of Social Science*, which embodies

the same trend. In all alike, history is expounded as a struggle between exploiters and exploited; in none of them is there any conception of unbiassed culture; in all of them the progress of mankind is regarded as an exclusively materialistic affair, the outcome of technical advances and of the increasing reaction of the "oppressed" against their "oppressors".

After this preamble, I shall allow the Soviet pedagogues to speak for themselves. In the preface to the *German Reader for Middle and Higher Schools*, the compiler writes: "My aim has been, through a careful choice of material, to give a picture of the class struggle and of class enmity, an impression of the life of the proletariat and of its indefatigable creative impulse. I have tried by literary selections to stigmatise religious superstition and priestly hypocrisy, and to bring class antagonism into the foreground. The ardent rhythms of class poesy, descriptions of the militant workers, caricatures of the bourgeoisie—all these can steel the revolutionary will and inflame the lust for battle." Another German reader for children, entitled *Brotherhood*, contains the following atrocious passage: "Dese-crated, dishonoured, wading through blood, besoiled—such is bourgeois society. It presents itself to the world washed and brushed-up, making a pretence of morality, prating of culture and philosophy and ethics, of peace and order and righteousness. But, seen in its true colours, it is a ravening beast, celebrating a witches' sabbath of anarchy, a focus of pestilence." All this in italics, set forth in a reader for children with the official approval of the Soviet State. Here we have something more than mere political fanaticism; we have bestial hatred.

Bolshevik instruction is mainly concerned with Russia. The environing world, past and present, exists only in an atmosphere of social convulsion. For the elementary schools it suffices to give a few names and dates concerning the great French revolution and concerning the Paris Commune of 1871. In the higher schools, history begins with the slave revolt led by Spartacus. With a jump we pass to the Peasants' War

in Germany, and then proceed, by way of Cromwell and Robespierre, to the beginnings of the socialist movement in the nineteenth century.

#### 4. "SHAKESPEARE AND THE OTHER GERMAN COMPOSERS"

In 1928 I visited a model school in Moscow where the Dalton method of instruction was practised. Here I listened to the history lesson given in one of the higher classes. It was a sort of discussion regarding the German revolution, the teacher developing his theories while the pupils commented and questioned. A bright youth made a favourable impression on me by contraposing to the teacher's explanation of the causes of the failure of the German revolution ("failure" as regarded from the "Spartacist" standpoint) a view of his own which had been carefully thought out. When the lesson was over I had a talk with this pupil, and found him unquestionably well informed upon political matters, although his views had, naturally, a very strong Red bias. Then ensued the following little conversation:

"You know a great deal about our revolution. Have you any information concerning the great men of the western world, those of Germany for instance?"

"I don't quite understand. Please explain."

"I mean, do you know anything about our German poets and musicians?"

"Certainly."

Thereupon the teacher put in a word: "Yes, tell our visitor. You remember we have been reading Schiller!"

"Oh, yes, of course, Schiller."

"Do you know anything about Goethe?"

"Goethe? No, I don't think I ever heard of him."

"What about Shakespeare?"

"Yes, yes. Naturally I know about Shakespeare and the other German composers!"

The general lack of culture among the pupils in Russian

schools (I am not judging on the strength of the foregoing instance alone) is formidable, not to say alarming. A peculiarly distressing feature is the neglect of foreign tongues, this being all the worse in view of the fact that under the tsarist regime the intelligentsia showed a marvellous talent for languages. In the Russian university examinations, the answers given would be regarded as shameful in the lower classes of a German primary school. Hundreds of Soviet official reports could be quoted to confirm this statement. How, indeed, could it be otherwise? How could the young people of bolshevik Russia possibly find time and energy for serious study, seeing that from earliest childhood they are being crammed day after day with politgramota, with Party political data? Besides, the working hours allotted to meetings and demonstrations amount in the gross to dozens of millions. A large part, too, of the pupils' time is spent in vocational training. Technical skill is cultivated in workshops set apart for the purpose, and of late this technical training has come to play an increasing part in school life. The policy is sound enough, but its exaggerated development is tending to interfere yet more with the general culture of the Russian youth.

Although in other respects the bolsheviks are not blind to the dangers of their system, they do not seem to me seriously disturbed about the intellectual barbarism of the rising generation. Their delight in their young folk as a magnificent accession of strength monopolises their attention, to the exclusion of all concern as to the need for culture. The Party gives no thought, here, to anything but immediate political utility. This is most plainly manifest in the admissions to the higher schools. No matter how intelligent a lad of bourgeois origin may be, rarely if ever will he be accepted as a pupil at a middle or high school. On the other hand a Young Communist may be a dunce, but no one will be able to forbid him entrance to the university if his Party record be a good one. In the enormous majority of instances, a career is not open to persons of talent as such, but to those who are of

proletarian birth and to those whose devotion to the Party is beyond dispute. This topsy-turvy feudalism is perfectly accordant with the general philosophy of the bolsheviks, who consider it right, "during the epoch of the class struggle", to recapitulate with the cart before the horse all the sins that were perpetrated in the old order.

### 5. YOUNG-COMMUNIST MILITANCY

Most Russian children and adolescents are still living in their parents' houses. But the proportion of those who live away from home is larger than in any other country in the world. From what has been said above, it will be plain that the Russian children's homes and students' residences exist primarily for political purposes, their aim being to train thoroughly dependable communists, just as it is the aim of the cadet schools of the West to turn out officers who shall be "true-blue" army and navy men. All the successful products of Russian State education are, of course, members of the "Pioneers" or the "Komsomol", one or other of the Young Communist leagues which are the anterooms to the Communist Party. Each of these organisations has periodicals of its own; the latter, even, great daily papers, such as the "Komsomolskaya Pravda"; they have their own committees and congresses, their own local and national organisations; and (last, not least) their own internationals. German "pioneers", Javanese "pioneers", and so on, copy the youthful Russian exemplars just as their communist fathers and mothers ape the Russian bolsheviks. Whereas in the "Pioneers", whose members range in age from eight to twelve, the interests of children, such as the flaunting of communist emblems and the like, play the chief part—the "Komsomol", the league of the adolescents, is a power in the land. The leaders of this Red citadel of youth, and its press, spoiled as they are, pride themselves on a saucily "advanced" behaviour and on an ultra-revolutionary terminology. The Komsomoltsy regard themselves, so to say,



as the vanguard of the vanguard, i.e. of the Party, and are apt to make trouble in industrial enterprises and in the trade unions. A climax in the political pampering of the Red Youth was reached during the winter of 1929-1930, when the Party's "shock troops" consisted mainly of Komsomoltsy. Shock troops were sent to all points where, in official and economic life, the directives and orders of the Party were not being strictly fulfilled. These "udarniki" were commissioned to take ruthless action in order to ensure that the "correct line" should be resumed. Often brute force was used. They showed their worst side in the rural districts, where most of the outrages committed upon the peasants were the work of Young Communists. Still, the blame for these things must really be assigned to the bolshevik leaders, for the Soviet State has deliberately fostered relentlessness in the young, stifling in them any sense of veneration or respect for human dignity.

#### 6. PENURY AMONG SCHOOLTEACHERS

Since the Party has thus given the Red Youth a privileged position, the excesses of the Komsomoltsy are rarely blamed, and then only in the mildest terms. Adults in responsible public positions usually do their utmost to avoid clashes with Young Communists. Especially does this apply to the teaching staffs of the middle and higher schools and the universities, for members of these staffs, unless they are also members of the Party, will almost always come off badly in any such broil. The post of teacher in a Soviet school or of professor in a Soviet university is one of the most disagreeable that can possibly be imagined. I have been personally acquainted with many of these unhappy Russian pedagogues, and have found them all singing the same song. They say that they have no authority over their pupils, no protection against the arbitrary conduct of the inspectors; that the requisites for teaching are inadequate, and that the schoolrooms are overcrowded; that the pupils certainly display eagerness for knowledge, but

have no genuine powers of application; that politics rather than culture plays a preponderant part in the curriculum; and that, in consequence of the foregoing, the general level of education is far lower than it was in pre-revolutionary days. Notwithstanding the imposing figures paraded by the State Publishing House, as regards the production of schoolbooks, I have found Russian villages in which there was but one schoolbook available, and that in tatters! As for the material position of the Russian schoolteachers and professors, it leaves everything to be desired. The teacher in a village school receives a salary round about 50 roubles a month, which, taking into account the effective purchasing power of money, would correspond to a salary of somewhere about £30 a year in England. It is true that in November 1931 the teachers' salaries were raised to 90 roubles a month, but in view of the general rise in prices the real pay remains at the old level. University professors receive salaries ranging from 90 to 150 roubles. In exceptional instances, salaries as high as 700 roubles are paid. Furthermore, the professors enjoy the privilege of a supplementary 200 square feet of floor space for habitation; and the welfare institution known as the "Tsekubu" does something to ameliorate the material conditions of their lives. On the whole, however, like all members of the professional classes in the Soviet State, they are much worse off than their colleagues in the rest of the world. An extremely vigorous idealism is requisite for the performance of scientific work under the political, cultural, and material conditions that prevail in the Soviet Union.

I have known two headmasters who were well content under the new regime. In both instances they were able to enjoy the realisation of an educational system they had thought out long before the war, a system which was practically identical with the Soviet scheme of self-government and self-education by the pupils; and they managed their "labour communes", that is to say their schools, with paternal pride. In actual fact these two schools only differed from the others I have visited

in this respect, that, being regarded as experimental schools, they were better supplied with material means than the others, and thus naturally produced a better impression than the average Soviet school. All the same, in these model schools more even than in the ordinary Soviet schools, I had the impression that I was not visiting a place for serious study, but merely a huge laboratory packed with children, where these children played and were played with—or, to put it more bluntly, were made the subject of experiment. Were it only because of gross overcrowding of the classrooms, it was quite impossible for the youngsters to carry on their studies satisfactorily.

The one really satisfactory feature of all Soviet schools is that the pupils manifest a cheerful eagerness to learn, which contrasts favourably with the chill memories I have of my own school days. But in the West no less than in Russia, vigorous attempts are being made to arouse delight and interest in school work by new methods, and perhaps one may venture to hope that in the West education will not be forgotten or neglected for the sake of the method as it is in Soviet Russia.

## 7. SOVIET UNIVERSITIES

An account of the bolshevik universities comprises an exceptionally gloomy chapter in the story of contemporary Russian life. Regarded as an educational institution, a Soviet university suffers primarily from the fact that the students who enter it are so greatly lacking in general culture. Let me quote what the "Rabochaya Moskva", in its issue of March 24, 1929, wrote about the entrance examination for the universities. "Some of the answers are so preposterous that they seem to have been invented by an anecdotist. 'Who is now the secretary general of the Comintern?'—'Hindenburg'. The bright youth who made this answer had spent nine years in elementary and middle schools." About half of all the aspirants to university

study had no adequate knowledge of the Russian tongue. Under date November 12, 1927, "Pravda" wrote: "At the Engels Institute of Economics in Leningrad, 48.8 per cent of the would-be entrants had a deficient knowledge of Russian, and 15 per cent of them were completely illiterate. About fifty of the papers submitted were regarded as satisfactory. At the Second Moscow State University 3,649 papers were unsatisfactory as regards a command of Russian, and 13 per cent were barely satisfactory." At the Alexander Herzen Institute in Leningrad, the entrance examination showed the following results in respect of a command of the Russian tongue: "Above mediocre, 10 per cent; mediocre, 50 per cent; and below mediocre, 40 per cent. The same sort of results were reported by other universities."

In bolshevik educational periodicals we are told that the disastrously low level of culture at the Russian universities is solely ascribable to the fact that the present generation of students was trained at the elementary and middle schools during the difficult years after the revolution, when the material conditions for proper instruction were lacking. There is an element of truth in this contention; but it is no less incontestable (though who would dare to say as much in Russia?) that the class-war policy in education is chiefly to blame. No proletarian phrasemaking can shuffle out of the world the fact that the preference given among entrants to the culturally lowest strata of the population must fill the universities with students who are ill-fitted for a higher education. No one disputes the fact that a number of talented and therefore highly educable children are born in working-class and peasant homes; and it is indubitable that in capitalist countries far too little is done to bring this excellent and vigorous material to the sources of knowledge. The social origin of our German university students speaks plainly enough in this matter. On the average, however, experience shows that the offspring of mental workers are better equipped for university study than are the offspring.

the influences of heredity and early training are not to be lightly dismissed with a few fine phrases.

The principles that guide the choice of material for university study in Russia are shown by a decree of the Central Committee of the Bolshevik Party published on January 31, 1929, from which we take the following sentences: "The Central Committee regards it as essential to levy for study at the technical universities during the teaching year of 1929-1930 communists to the number of 1,000, among whom there must be at least 150 women. As to the social origin of the comrades to be thus levied, at least 75-80 per cent must be workers; these workers must have been engaged in their manual occupations for not less than five years and must have been busied in public avocations for from three to four years; the employees must for at least six or seven years have done responsible Party, Soviet, trade-union, or economic work." At the end of the decree comes a detailed assignment of the 1,000 to the various universities in the Russian realm. It is plain that the Party leaders hold sway over the Russian universities.

### 8. "RABFACS"

Now let me say a word or two about the workers' faculties, the "rabfacs". The underlying idea of these is one which came to the front at some of the younger German universities during the post-war period, the aim being to give opportunities for university study to workers eager for knowledge actually engaged in vocational work who have not enjoyed the advantages of middle-school training. But whereas in Germany this has implied no more than a removal of the formal hindrances in the way of students of working-class origin entering the universities, and the aspirants have, quite rightly, been expected to give evidence of having attained the requisite level of culture—in Russia the intellectual demands made upon "students from the bench" have been reduced to a very low level. The trade unions and the Party organisations can send to the rabfacs

young persons who have been engaged in manual work for at least three years and have a knowledge of reading, writing, and arithmetic. In order to ensure a subsistence for these working-class students, the rabfacs carry on their educational work mainly in the evenings, thus corresponding to the evening continuation schools of England and to the people's university courses in Germany. But the educational work of these institutions—at any rate in those I have myself inspected—is so primitive that one gets rather the impression of being at a village school than at a training college for would-be university students. At the present time in Soviet Russia there are about 100 such rabfacs, attended by approximately 40,000 students. The period of training at a rabfac lasts four years. The bolsheviks declare that those who have passed out of rabfacs have “done very well” at the universities; but university professors tell another story, which seems to me more accordant with the nature of the institutions in question. I have not, however, had an opportunity of making a trustworthy study of this matter.

The acknowledged aim of the rabfacs is the proletarianisation of the universities. As a part of the most recent bolshevik revolutionary schemes and as an element in the famous Five-Year Plan, it is understood that in the course of the next five years 60 per cent of all university students shall be persons who are qualified at the rabfacs. “The manual worker must win his victories on the mental field of the nation as well as elsewhere.” This aim is utterly inconsistent, seeing that manual labour is one of the chief occupations at the elementary and middle schools of Russia, so that there ought to be no idea of a mental worker being in any respect superior to a manual worker.

In fact, theory and general knowledge are to be acquired only to the extent of a necessary minimum, the substantial aim being to gain practical knowledge and complete mastery of the necessary vocational technique. In conformity with these principles, lectures

laboratory work. I have already mentioned that politgramota occupies a leading part in the university programme as well as in the schools.<sup>1</sup>

Although the communists lay much stress on anti-militarist propaganda, it is interesting to find that in all the faculties of all the universities attendance at military courses is compulsory, even for women students. Although utilitarian considerations are predominant in the Soviet universities, I have throughout Russia heard bitter complaints concerning the vocational incapacity of those who have passed out of the technical institutes, whereas in respect of theoretical knowledge they are said to be fairly well equipped.

#### 9. STUDENT LIFE IN SOVIET RUSSIA

When speaking of the deficiencies of education in Soviet Russia, we must not forget the economic difficulties of Russian students. "Izvestia" wrote under date March 8, 1928: "When we bear in mind that the monthly stipends of our university students and worker students amount on the average to 25 roubles, we find it difficult to understand how even the most elementary requisites of existence can be supplied. The minimum requirements for a proletarian student are estimated as follows:

Food	.. ..	20 roubles 10 copecks
Shelter	.. ..	3 roubles
Educational materials		3 roubles
Cultural expenditure		3 roubles
Various necessities	..	2 roubles 50 copecks
Amortisation (?)	..	2 roubles
Subscription	..	0 roubles 50 copecks

Total      34 roubles 10 copecks per month.

"Only about 40 per cent of the 72,000 students in our great cities receive even this inadequate stipend."

<sup>1</sup> In Old Russia, the counterpart of politgramota was that the students in all faculties were compelled to attend lectures on religion

As regards the insufficient housing accommodation for students, the official organ of the Soviet government writes in very plain terms: "In a large number of instances the floor space available for the students amounts to only 25 square feet per head. Examples: the United Rabfac of the Arts, the Industrial Economic Institute. Overcrowding is almost incredible. Here is one example. A young man sleeps during the day and works all night. Why? Because he has no proper habitation and has no books, and because he can only obtain sleeping accommodation and the materials for study when the student to whom they belong is not using them. . . . In Moscow there is the well-known Yermakoff dormitory. In the centre of the Baumann district is the Yulyanovka House, the intolerably cold and dirty headquarters of the Chief Administration for Expert Training. Students are housed in both of these buildings. It is difficult to say which of the two night-refuges is the better." Turning to the food question, "Izvestia" goes on: "The diet of our students is altogether unsatisfactory. Whereas the normal requirement of calories is reckoned at 3,520 per diem, in students' boarding-houses the average supply is 800, or if breakfast is provided (not compulsory) 1,000. The charge for a student's mid-day dinner, comprising half a pound of meat and half an ounce of fat, is from thirty-one to thirty-two copecks. No extra payment is demanded for foul air, overcrowding, and dirt, which are the rule in these places."

Again: "Words fail us for the description of the inadequacy of the supply of textbooks. There isn't a supply! In the technical universities, we find on the average one textbook to thirty students. The reason for this becomes plain when we compare the average cost of a textbook, which is fifteen roubles, with the average student's income. We can also understand why it is that the students begin to queue up in front of the libraries at six in the morning. . . . As for medical care, the students are (to put it mildly) very badly off."

Once more; "How do these young people make ends meet? They have to seek every conceivable opportunity of earning



a trifle; scrubbing floors, chopping wood, carrying parcels, shovelling snow, taking jobs as night-watchmen and servants. The women students clean windows and do charing or laundry work. The worst of it is that the labour bureaus pay no heed to the essential nature of a student's avocation and commandeer these young people for rough work which even the unemployed refuse to undertake. A woman medical student will be put to digging sand out of the river bed, a violinist to cleaning up the Nyeskuchny park, a budding schoolmistress to work as a 'boot-translator' in a factory, while a future electrical engineer will earn a pittance mending torn gunny-sacks."

The foregoing blunt description of how Russian students live, taken from the columns of the leading Soviet newspaper, is very different from the fables concocted in the Kremlin for foreign consumption.

The devastating criticisms we read in the Soviet press concerning the practical competence of university students of the new generation leave us no option but to infer that the universities are bad and that the system on which they are conducted is erroneous. This is not to be wondered at, seeing that the universities are governed by the same basic principle as the elementary and middle schools. Their main purpose is to turn out absolutely reliable bolsheviks. When there is talk of a "Red spets" (specialist or expert), the emphasis is on the adjective. There is an additional reason for the inadequacy of the Red spetsy—they are prone to be lazy! Nor need we be surprised at such a state of things. While attending school, and in the communist leagues of youth, they have been indoctrinated with an exaggerated sense of self-importance, have come to regard themselves as leaders of the people and as outstanding "public workers". Naturally when they are sent to the provinces, as most of them are, they have no taste for routine official work, for the humdrum life of a country doctor, or what not. This explains the fact which was a disgrace to the country of the Five-Year Plan, the land of a State-directed purposive economy, namely that at the very time

when provincial industry and the villages were clamouring for experts, hundreds upon hundreds of unemployed young engineers, doctors, and teachers, hungry and plaintive, were thronging the corridors of the labour bureaus. The Soviet authorities were unable to cope with this evil, despite the use of vigorous coercive measures; but they would never admit that they were merely reaping the fruit of their own educational system.

#### 10. ILLITERACY

If you look merely at the figures without analysing them too closely, you will contemplate a more cheerful picture of Russian elementary education. To begin at the lowest level, the great campaign against illiteracy has had a fair measure of success. If we are to believe Soviet statistics (which we have no means of checking), the proportion of illiterates, as recorded in the census of 1926, had fallen from 64·5 per cent to 55·5 per cent during the period of bolshevik rule. This lags far behind the expectations and promises of the Reds, and shows that more than half the population of Soviet Russia still consists of persons unable to read and write. No doubt such success as has been achieved in the campaign against illiteracy has been mainly the work of the press. There has been a notable increase in the number of newspapers as compared with pre-war days, and the improved system of distribution carries them into the remotest villages. Another important weapon in the fight against illiteracy consists of the "reading huts", assembly-rooms in the villages where printed matter of all kinds is available for readers and where readings-aloud are given from time to time. Great numbers of popular libraries have also been established. To promote the elementary education of the masses, the Soviet government has also made a wide use of cinema and wireless, doing its utmost to popularise these. As a matter of course they are primarily used for bolshevik propaganda, but this does not alter the fact that their general introduction effects educational progress.

It would be wrong to underestimate the work the Reds have done in the cultural field. During the bolshevik regime there has unquestionably been a great intellectual awakening in Russia, and this will bear fruit. What remains open is the question, who will reap the harvest?

Not even yet has education been made universal and compulsory in Soviet Russia, the introduction of this reform being postponed from year to year. According to a recent scheme, school attendance will be enforced in European Russia from the year 1934-1935,<sup>1</sup> and in Asiatic Russia five years later. We must remember that hitherto the period of school attendance has been four years in the towns, and only three years in many parts of the countryside; and that Soviet newspapers are full of complaints to the effect that, even in regions where schools abound, the duration of schooling is often much less than this—especially in country districts. The census of 1926 showed that in Ukraine, where it is proposed to make school attendance compulsory sooner than in other parts of Russia, 46 per cent of children of school age are still unable to read and write; and that there was school accommodation for only 42 per cent of the children between eight and eleven years of age. Before the war, the number of elementary schools in Russia was 120,000, or, deducting the schools in the lost provinces, 104,000. During the civil war, the number fell to 88,000, but had by 1927, according to official statistics, risen to 108,000, thus exceeding the pre-war figure. Between 1914 and 1927 the number of pupils in the elementary schools is said to have increased from 7,200,000 to 9,900,000. Still more encouraging are the official data concerning higher education. According to Lunacharsky, who was minister for education in the R.S.F.S.R. down to 1929, in 1927 there were attending the middle schools 40 per cent more pupils than in 1914. But even this advance is put into the shade by the increase in the universities and technical schools, which have sprouted from the earth like mushrooms.

<sup>1</sup> The Russian working year begins on October 1st and ends on September 30th

Their number has increased fourfold; and in 1927 there were, in round figures, 160,000 students—the number of university students in Germany being 112,315 during the year 1928. The figures for Russia must, however, be accepted with a grain of salt, for they multiply like Falstaff's men in buckram. Whereas in a speech made on October 14, 1924, Lunacharsky had stated the number of elementary schools to be 104,000 and the number of pupils to be 7,000,000, only three days later, at a sitting of the C.E.C., he gave the figures as 108,000 and 9,900,000 respectively!



*BOOK FOUR*

CULTURE AS A WHOLESALE PRODUCT



## CHAPTER ELEVEN

### THE PARTY AND SCIENCE

#### 1. OBSESSION OF NUMBERS

SOVIET RUSSIA is obsessed by numbers. Figures *à l'américaine*, percentage results worked out to two places of decimals, steeply rising curves of production, elaborate diagrams—these things intoxicate the bolsheviks, not only in the economic field, but also in the field of education. Just as some minor Party official who has delivered two or three pseudo-scientific lectures likes to be styled “Professor So-and-so” by foreigners, so do the countless cultural institutions of contemporary Russia give themselves pretentious titles. There are plenty of genuine universities and academies, but the spurious ones are even more numerous. For instance there are Sunday and Evening and Workers’ Universities (two-and-twenty of them in Moscow alone), which correspond to our continuation schools, and are not really “universities” at all, since for the most part they give only technical instruction. Besides these, there are correspondence courses connected with the universities; there are communist “universities” and academies for the training of Party propagandists; and there are “universities” of a still more peculiar kind, the before-mentioned anti-religious universities which inculcate contempt for the creeds and the Churches and teach a special brand of Darwinism touched up for bolshevik daily consumption.

#### 2. A FALSE COMPARISON

A brief digression may be pardoned. Bolshevik education is often compared with the mass education of the United States, but the likeness is only superficial. The uniform mass education and mass culture of the American Union are products of a



uniform national spirit which has been a spontaneous growth of American soil. On the other hand the proletarianisation of Russian culture is the outcome of a violation of the Russian folk-spirit, which is anarchistic by natural inclination, and has had an alien stamp imposed on it by the Reds. Doubtless the bolsheviks are in many respects stimulated by the American example, and European standards are far from satisfying their gargantuan appetite. But that is another story. In educational and cultural matters their gaze is still fixed on Europe rather than on the New World.

### 3. SCIENTIFIC ACHIEVEMENTS

The proletarianisation of mental life means something more radical than filling the old centres of learning with young men and women of the working class, something more than giving to Sunday lecture courses the magniloquent name of universities. It implies also the degradation of the "old" science and art to the bolshevik level. During the first decade of the bolshevik dominion, the Russian universities were, indeed, leniently treated as institutions for research—just as during the same period a fair amount of toleration was shown towards religion. The Party took a good deal of trouble to induce distinguished Russian scientists to collaborate with the new regime. Large disbursements were made for scientific purposes—larger, perhaps, than were warranted in view of the financial stresses of the time. Indulgence was even extended to men of standing in the scientific world whose anti-bolshevik sentiments were notorious. The aim of the Soviet authorities was to show that "Soviet science" could vie with the science of the West, and to convince the world at large that the reputed anticultural tendencies of bolshevism were a figment of the reactionary imagination. These tactics were effective so long as the Reds refrained from meddling with the scientific life of the country, and confined themselves to the propagandist claim that the scientific achievements of

New Russia must be posted to their credit. Indeed, they claimed the scientific achievements of Old Russia as well, and this with the utmost effrontery. In the year 1925 they celebrated the bicentenary of the foundation of the "Soviet" Academy of the Sciences in Petersburg, the Party's implication being that it was, so to say, the mother of this world-famous institution which really came into being on the initiative of Peter the Great and with the assistance of Leibniz. Nevertheless, the fostering of the scientific armamentarium of the country, the explorations effected by learned Russian travellers, participation by Russians in foreign scientific congresses, and various other noteworthy doings (in art as well as in science), had their due effect. Russian science became a bridge across the gulf that yawned between the western world and the Soviet State, which otherwise would have been regarded as hopelessly alien. The value of this bridge was demonstrated by the visits of Russian professors to Berlin in the years 1927 and 1928. The expedition of the "Krassin", the Russian icebreaker, which sped northward to the rescue of the Italians who had failed in an attempt to reach the North Pole, was another cultural achievement which redounded to the credit of Soviet Russia. Propaganda apart, there can be no question that during the first ten years of its existence Red Russia did good work for science.

Not until the despiritualisation of the regime began under the dictatorship of Stalin did it come to pass that the scientific life of Russia, too, was degraded into an instrument for the maintenance of political power. There was no longer place for men of learning within the framework of general radicalisation that was imposed during the year 1928. The intellectual trend of the Party was made plain by the way in which it sent its most noted leaders into the wilderness, replacing them by obscure fanatics like Yaroslavsky and subaltern martinets like Molotoff and Mikoyan. The signal for a purge of the scientific corporations was given by the new elections to the Academy of the Sciences in January 1929.

## 4. A BLOW WITH THE FIST

Since the beginning of the revolution there had been few changes in the membership of the Academy, although some of its leading spirits—Karpinsky, Oldenburg, and Fersmann—were frank opponents of the Soviet State. But towards the close of 1928, on the ground that the working scope of the institution was to be enlarged by the inclusion of the social sciences, instructions were issued for an increase in membership. Of the forty-two new candidates, thirty-~~11~~ secured the requisite two-thirds majority, among them being a number of well-known communists such as Buharin, Kryshanovsky, Pokrovsky, and Ryazanoff. Three of the candidates, the communist professors Lukin, Deborin, Friche, though they received more than half the votes, : to obtain two-thirds, and were therefore rejected. When the result became known, the presidium of the Academy was greatly alarmed, well knowing what a storm would be raised. That very day, therefore, it asked permission of the Soviet government to hold a fresh election in the case of the three defeated candidates, an election in which the thirty-nine new members were to vote. Since nearly all of these latter were either avowed Reds or trusted supporters of the bolshevik régime, it was expected that thereby a two-thirds majority would be ensured. Let me say at once that the election was repeated, and with the anticipated result—but that thereby the Petersburg Academy of the Sciences forfeited its standing in the scientific world as a free corporation. Bolshevik reasons of State had got the upper hand in the “learned island”, as the Reds mockingly termed the Academy.

But this desperate act of abasement did not avert the wrath of the Party. The Soviet press, as soon as it had recovered from its amazement at the “counter-revolutionary behaviour” of the Academy, went on for weeks railing at the erudite corporation and its “corrupt” members. The dance was opened by Larin, whom the Party always sends into the firing line

when something disagreeable has to be said in the rudest way possible. Writing an article for "Pravda", this worthy demanded that thenceforward the Academy should be kept under "proletarian control" and that the political side of academic activities should be more sharply scrutinised. The membership of the Academy must also be subjected to revision ere long. On this occasion, however, Larin was one of the mildest of the critics. A week later, another contributor to "Pravda" described the original rejection of the three professors as a manifest anti-Soviet demonstration, and demanded the entire reorganisation of the Academy.

#### 5. LUNACHARSKY AT THE HELM

It was Lunacharsky, people's commissary for education and cultural pope of the Soviet Union, who brought down the bird. In an article which appeared in "Izvestia", he reviled and made mock of the Academy which, as minister for education, it should have been his first duty to protect, and whose scientific achievements he had for years been vaunting in foreign lands. He threatened suppression. "What are these academicians, these 'immortals' thinking about? Can they possibly imagine that the Communist Party, the Soviet government, and our other public authorities will lack the nerve to make an end of them and transfer to a new scientific organisation whatever cultural goods they may possess? Can they have fancied that we are so fond of them as to indulge them in all their whimsies? Do they suppose that their friends in foreign parts are strong enough . . . to save them from the just indignation of the Soviet power?—If that is what the Academicians have believed, they have been playing with fire, and I am afraid they will find that they have burned their fingers badly."

This same Lunacharsky, who here browbeats the members of one of the most famous scientific institutions in the world for having failed to elect three comparatively unknown com-

munist professors among a list of forty-two, who berates them like naughty schoolboys and threatens them with annihilation—had been impudent enough to write a film entitled *Salamander*, in which he had, most mendaciously, pilloried the German universities as foci of servitude and political oppression. I find it necessary to dilate upon the unsavoury topic of Lunacharsky because for ten years, until his fall in 1929, he was supreme in the Red Russian educational field, and had always been received in Germany with the most cordial hospitality. Some of his dramas, though of little account, were even performed on the German stage. His overthrow, for the rest, was not the outcome of his revolutionary mouthings (in which, I think, he was playing to the gallery), but ensued because he was regarded as lukewarm in the bolshevising of Soviet education. Characteristically enough, he was succeeded by a Red general, Bubnoff.

#### 6. RUTHLESS DISMISSALS OF PROFESSORS

During the momentous years that have followed, the Academy of the Sciences has been made to suffer for its "sins". Forgiveness is a word which has no place in the bolshevik vocabulary. Any one who has been blacklisted will be "liquidated" soon or late. One after another, and upon one specious pretext or another, vengeance has been taken on the offenders. Oldenburg, who had been the most influential among the old leaders of the institution, was "dealt with" because one day in the archives of the Academy there came to light a document alleged to be of supreme importance to the history of the revolution, and (so it was said) deliberately withheld from the Soviet public, eager for knowledge. Next came the turn of Fersmann, the second in command. To-day all the important posts in the Academy are filled by Marxians. But the Petersburg Academy of the Sciences is only one (although the most famous) among Russian centres of learning that have suffered under the new dispensation, have been victimised

by the champions of the "new trend". The Ukraine Academy has fared even worse. This body was a Soviet foundation, an expression of the policy of encouraging the nationalities. Its members were for months dragged through the dirt in trials for "espionage", and some of them were condemned. The Leningrad election scandal was the prelude to a fierce campaign against professors and experts. In foreign scientific journals and in students' notebooks official ferrets got to work sniffing out the alleged anti-Soviet utterances of Russian men of learning. When instructors were to be reappointed at the universities, candidates were examined as to the soundness of their political views—students and factory workers functioning among the examiners! According to statistics published in the Soviet press in the beginning of November 1929, as an outcome of this raid, at eleven Russian universities 65 professors and 155 instructors were dismissed and 98 professors failed to secure the renewal of their appointments.

This persecution, however, seems a small matter when compared with the war of annihilation which was begun against the men of learning early in 1930, and is still in progress. During this disastrous year, hundreds, many hundreds, of professors were thrown into gaol, battalions of them at a time, on suspicion merely, without any specific charge being brought. Among them were men of worldwide fame, such as Platonoff, the doyen among Russian historians. After sensational trials, or without public trial, on the vague ground of "sabotage", "counter-revolutionary activities", "noxious behaviour", and the like, dozens have been executed, or consigned to a living death in the prisons of the OGPU (see Chapter Fifteen, "Soviet Justice"). Even the electoral comedy of 1928 was renewed when, in February 1931, the academicians ventured to reject the communist Rothstein.

During 1930 various scientific corporations were utterly depopulated, so that European scientists, who had hitherto since the revolution been able to keep in intellectual touch with their Russian colleagues, now, in many instances, do

not know whither to turn. It is hardly possible to overestimate the tragical character of this devastation, and it is by no means easy to account for so senseless an outburst of wrath. No doubt some of the "offenders" were needed to provide materials for the great sabotage trials that were instituted to hoodwink the Russian populace as to the causes of the general decline in the standard of life. But this will not suffice to explain mass arrests. Perhaps Stalin and the OGPU design by their war of extermination against scientists to complete the isolation of Soviet Russia from the outer world?

## CHAPTER TWELVE

### SOVIET ART

#### I. THE TREASURES OF RUSSIAN ART MADE ACCESSIBLE

DURING the first phases of the bolshevik regime, art, like science, enjoyed a privileged position. The Red leaders were not narrow-minded. While making frenzied endeavours to promote the development of a "new" art, of a "revolutionary" mass-art, they were not backward in the attempt to collect and safeguard the art treasures handed down from the pre-revolutionary past. No doubt amid the storms of the civil war, rabid marauders, uncultured Red Guardsmen, were responsible for much wanton destruction; but in the bolshevik ranks there was a sufficiency of persons inspired with such genuine enthusiasm for art as to make sure that prompt measures should be taken to preserve an invaluable heritage. The existing museums were soon packed from cellar to garret with the spoils of the expropriated bourgeoisie. Several years were needed to arrange and make accessible to the public these extensive acquisitions, which must be the envy of all the museum directors in other parts of the world. The authorities had the good sense and kindness, in many instances, to appoint the sometime owners of collections as custodians of these in the State or municipal service.

Under bolshevik rule, the Russian museums have become effective centres of popular culture. On holidays and in the evenings when work is over there is an unceasing stream of proletarian visitors, with experts to guide and to explain—though it must be admitted that the experts are sometimes lacking in expertise! Things which in the old days were to be seen only in private collections by a few amateurs, can now be enjoyed and are enjoyed by the masses. Watching these Russians, I always did so with a subflavour of regret as I thought



of the empty halls of our German museums and art galleries. German curators, German club managers, and German educationists would do well to take example by what the Russian Reds are doing in the way of the popularisation of art treasures.

The bolsheviks justify State confiscation of private collections on the ground that private ownership of such things signifies a robbery of the masses. Well, in Germany likewise post-war conditions have done a good deal to transfer art treasures from private to public hands—insofar as they have not found their way to the United States! As a matter of principle, however, we have to ask ourselves whether the huge collections of which the Soviet State is justly proud would ever have come into being had not private patrons, century after century, supported and stimulated artists by purchasing their works. At any rate as far as painting is concerned, what the State has done in this way has everywhere been very little when compared with the activities of private buyers. Besides, the State as purchaser steps out of the field whenever hard times come. Post-war budgets show this cruelly enough. State “thrift” begins here; whereas private collectors are apt to curtail expenditure, when needs must, in any other quarter than that of the art which makes a special appeal to them. The normal State cannot, as can the individual, sacrifice the necessary to the agreeable. Even Soviet Russia has, during the stresses of recent years, followed the example of private collectors, transmuting into cash by sales in foreign parts a terribly large proportion of its art treasures. Nor has it been scrupulous to earmark for cultural purposes the sums thus gained—witness the subsidies paid to foreign communists! The “new trend”, the increasing radicalism of the day, has done evil work in the museums as well as elsewhere. For instance, at Moscow in the typically Russian Tretyakoff Gallery, the pictures have been rearranged from the “social” outlook—pictures of peasants, of workers, of landowners, and so forth, being grouped together regardless of style and date.

## 2. OFFICIALS IN THE SERVICE OF ART

The development of art in Soviet Russia has shown clearly whither the socialisation of art can lead. Any one interested in this matter will do well to glance at the illustrations in Füllöp-Miller's *Geist und Gesicht des Bolschewismus*<sup>1</sup>, and to compare them with the more recent work of Soviet artists as reproduced by communist publishing houses in Germany. He will note that the fine artistic impetus of the years that immediately followed the November revolution has subsided, giving place to a mediocre, humdrum style. As far as paintings are concerned, the work of Red artists is now thoroughly second-rate; in architecture, the highest level ranks (let us say) with that of the Weimar Bauhaus of 1922; and only in sculpture have there been any noteworthy achievements in recent days, though even these do not outshine the sculptural work of contemporary Europe. Among the numerous revolutionary monuments of Russia I do not know of one which attains the moral strength and artistic freedom of Trubetskoy's monument to Alexander III in Petersburg. The new telegraph building in Moscow and the House of Industry in Kharkov, imposing though they be, are artistically weak when compared with the Chile House in Hamburg or the French Airship Hall in Orly.

The contrast between the bolshevik and European artistic worlds becomes even more striking when we compare the average work of the two, instead of looking at the peaks. In Germany, in Holland, in England, and in France, during the last decade, architecture has been revolutionised, has become instinct with energy and packed with ideas, as never since the days of rococo. Soviet architecture, on the other hand, like that of America, remains eclectic, the architecture of those who keep their eyes anxiously fixed on western prototypes. I do not mean to say that it is utterly banal; it is not so bad

<sup>1</sup> Amalthea-Verlag, Vienna, 1926. English Translation, "The Mind and Face of Bolshevism" (Putnam, 1927). This author's material belongs to the period before 1925.

as was European architecture at the turn of the century; but there is no joy in it, there are no ideas, it is bureaucratic. This brings us to the reason for the decline. Soviet art, like all the vital manifestations of bolshevism, has become a prosaic means to an end. What else could we expect? A leader-writer, perhaps, can continue to display revolutionary fire for many years in succession; but a painter restricted for ever to the same narrow conceptual round—what can he become but a dauber, or at best a routinist? The great majority of revolutionary Russian artists have degenerated into mere officials in the service of art, persons who must earn their livelihood by painting portraits of Stalin, chiselling busts of Lenin, making stereotyped representations of “idealised” workers, always with an eye to retaining Party favour. In like manner, under the old regime, had their brethren to paint in oils or to mould in clay the fat wives of successful entrepreneurs, and to depict beribboned privy councillors in conventional uniforms.

### 3. THE STAGE-LIFE OF RUSSIAN PRODUCERS AND ACTORS IS SHORT

A study of the theatre will show perhaps more clearly than a study of the plastic arts in Russia how quickly the bolsheviks use up their artists. Consider two of the best known names, Meyerhold and Eisenstein. Fülöp-Miller's illustrations prove beyond question that the Meyerhold of the early days of bolshevism was a stage reformer and a revolutionist. To make an end of the reign of classicism on the Russian boards was, indeed, a task beyond his powers, but, all the same, his ideas bore good fruit in the Russian theatrical world and in that of Europe as well.

The symbolism, the winged fervour, the youthful revolutionary fire of Meyerhold's productions were most refreshing to those who had grown weary of the old style of naturalism—excellent after its kind—of the plays at the Stanislavsky Theatre in Moscow. Well, what has happened to Meyerhold now? Enough to say that in the year 1928 it was only with

difficulty that this sometime revolutioniser of the Soviet theatre was induced to return to Russia from a journey abroad. In that same year a number of the other magnates of the Soviet theatrical world, such as Granovsky, the Habimas, and Chekoff shook the dust of Russia off their feet for ever. Eisenstein, the film manager, creator of the masterly films, *Potemkin* and *Mother*, has rested on his laurels since then. The film he produced for the decennial celebration of the November revolution was a complete disappointment. Here likewise, then, we note a speedy paralysis of artistic energy whose causes it behoves us to discuss.

#### 4. RUSSIAN FILMS

First, however, let me say a few words about Soviet films. The Russians did good service by liberating the film from too close a connexion with the ordinary stage. Before Eisenstein and his *Potemkin*, the dramatic film, as contrasted with cinema artifices and grotesques, always suffered from the fact that the "movie" was regarded and treated as a substitute for stage production. In Moscow, at length, it was made clear that the essence of the film is tempo and mass movement. What was so peculiarly impressive in the *Potemkin* film? Was it the bestial representation of wounds, of children's eyes being destroyed, of revolutionists and counter-revolutionists showing their teeth at one another? These things were merely repulsive, even in the mitigated form in which they were allowed to be shown on the hither side of the Red frontier. No, the impressive features of *Potemkin* were the march of the masses across lofty ridges, the rhythmical movements of the advancing sharpshooters, the boots of men in rapid retreat, the smoking silhouettes of cruisers, machinery in motion—in a word, the swift succession of details which made us breathless as we watched. There is no need to waste many words describing the wonders of the Russian film, seeing that, though with less talent, nearly all the film producers of Europe and America have adopted Eisenstein's recipe.

Why was Soviet Russia the first country to find the true scope of the film? Because the film is so admirably suited for the representation of mass scenes. Furthermore the cinema is a superexcellent means of propaganda because it carries its message far and wide among the people, whereas the ordinary stage fails to do so—at any rate outside Russia, and the propagandist message of the Russian film is largely directed towards foreigners. It would be a mistake to suppose that the Russian people is as much interested as we are in the great Soviet films. Paradoxical though the statement may seem, it is a fact that the Soviet film industry obtains the financial resources requisite for the production of the excellent films it exports by producing for home consumption sensational trash of the kind with which the “great” producers of Europe and America have made us all familiar. When we remember the cultural level of the inhabitants of the towns of Russia, we can hardly be surprised that the screen favourites of this public are not Eisenstein or Pudovkin, but Lubich, Lämmle, Fairbanks, Pickford, Pat and Patachon, and Greta Garbo. The Soviet cinemas would be half empty unless they produced trash, foreign as well as Russian. The Russian cinema fan, being stuffed with politics and propaganda in daily life, has no inclination to spend his hard-earned money that the screen may continue the work of propaganda in his leisure hours. Still, the film periodicals of Russia, being of course under Party supervision, are continually protesting against the importation of bourgeois films, and with good reason, from the bolshevik standpoint, seeing that the foreign film is one of the few breaches in the Russian wall, giving the Soviet proletariat a glimpse of the variety, cheerfulness, and colour of foreign life.

##### 5. THE MYSTERY OF THE RUSSIAN THEATRE

On the stage the bolsheviks are troubled by a similar cleavage, a similar conflict, between propagandist aims and public taste.

In the theatre, likewise, the masses keep their customary level, and there likewise do they seek refreshment from the perpetual "politics" of their everyday lives. The passionate love of the Russians for the theatre has raised Russian dramatic art to wonderful heights, with the result that Russian players and Russian dancers enjoy an unparalleled and worldwide reputation. In part, too, this success is accounted for by the excellence of dramatic training in Russia. Before he makes his debut in some minor part, a Russian actor will have spent years in the studio, working at great roles, that of Hamlet not excepted. A Russian ensemble, thanks to this extraordinarily thorough preliminary training, is really an ensemble, and not, as in almost all the theatres of the West, a cheap frame for three or four arrogant stars. A Russian theatrical company is animated by a delight in the work, by a joy in dramatic creation, which the ablest of our western stage managers vainly endeavour to arouse. From early days Russian stage life has been collectivist and fraternal, whereas the European theatre is a sort of class State in miniature, a place where snobbery plays a formidable part. Since I am quitting my own specialty in speaking thus of theatrical matters, let me say that I should not venture to say so were not such impressions continually reawakened in my mind when I return from Russian theatres to those of Europe. The collectivism of Russian stage life made the transition to the Soviet regime comparatively easy, all the more seeing that Russian dramatic literature, like Russian literature in general, had even in tsarist days a strong revolutionary flavour. To begin with, too, before the brutalisation of recent years, the bolshevik leaders were theatre lovers and were kindly to the stage. Such men as Chaliapin, the famous singer, and Stanislavsky, the great producer, speedily adapted themselves to the new conditions, and the Soviet State allowed them to go on working much in the old way. (No doubt the Party hoped that the Red doctrine would effect an easy conquest of stage, dramatists, and spectators.) Besides, a number of the lights of the theatrical world, with Meyerhold in the forefront,

might be expected to establish a genuine, totally bolshevik drama. The authorities therefore allowed matters to take their course, being content, in order to help on the movement which they anticipated, to open the numberless theatres of Russia to the working masses by free tickets and low prices. In the place of swallow-tails, full-dress uniforms, and décolleté gowns, there were now to be seen men in blouses, women with red kerchiefs on their heads, and soldiers in the uniform of the Red Guard. Delicate scents had been replaced by the strong odour of Russian workaday life.

Of course this policy cost a lot of money, since the proletarian audiences paid little or nothing. During a considerable time, the Soviet authorities made great sacrifices on behalf of the stage, for which they must be given due credit. But their zeal evaporated as soon as the Party began to realise that the revolutionising of the theatre was making no advance. Here were the difficulties: if the prices of the seats were raised, the "new audience" vanished, for the workers preferred to go to the cinemas, which were cheaper; and if the proletarian trend was emphasised in the production, if an increasing proportion of revolutionary pieces was included in the repertoire, the management scared away, not only the new audience, but the old—those to whom theatre-going had become a habit, but who had no taste for propaganda. Very characteristic is the fact that Meyerhold's revolutionary drama was chiefly attended by intellectuals and persons belonging to the upper strata of bolshevik life, and that the workers would only go to such plays if they were provided with free tickets, preferring classical ballet dancing and stage plays of the old sort. The fable that the masses have a revolutionary taste in cultural matters has been involuntarily dispelled in Berlin likewise by such bolshevik managers as Piscator, who have found it impossible to fill their houses with proletarians, but have been able to attract bourgeois who wanted to be "in the swim" and who find revolutionary art a stimulus to jaded nerves.

In Moscow the outcome of these developments was a long-

continued struggle which is still in progress, and as a result of which (as already said) the best dramatic talent has taken refuge across the frontier. Primarily the battle raged, not between the stage and the government, but between the Commissariat for Education and the Commissariat for Finance, inasmuch as the former wanted the revolutionising of the theatre, whereas the latter wanted to reduce the deficit. For a time the Party leaders, likewise, held divergent views about this question. In the end the whole burden of dramatic production was thrust back on to the shoulders of the managers, very few of whom were communists. They were told that they must produce "sound" plays and must at the same time make their theatres pay. The Commissariat for Finance put them on increasingly short commons, and the censorship grew ever stricter. Let me exemplify this by giving an account of what has happened at two of the Moscow theatres whose names are well known abroad, Stanislavsky's and Tairoff's.

#### 6. CENSORSHIP OF THE DRAMA

Stanislavsky's repertoire still consists of the pieces which made him world-famous, with Chekoff's plays in the foreground. He also produces the historical dramas of Alexei Tolstoy, which have a revolutionary trend. But, soon after the revolution, Stanislavsky, like all the Russian theatrical managers, was compelled to stage purely revolutionary plays. Although his public consists mainly of intellectuals, the two or three really good pieces of this kind were very successful, *The Armoured Train*, for example, and *The Squaring of the Circle*.

But when he was ordered to increase the proportion of revolutionary plays in his repertoire, Stanislavsky found it impossible to comply, for the reason that bolshevik writers had penned few, if any,actable pieces. In his perplexity Stanislavsky, somewhere about 1925 I believe, applied to Bulgakoff, a skilled writer with a talent for setting in a good revolutionary framework political lessons to which the



authorities might well take exception. Every one of his plays has involved a long fight with the censorship, some of them being passed in the end while others have been prohibited. The one which gave him especial fame in the Soviet theatrical world was entitled *Turbine Days*, describing the struggle and the destruction of an officer's family during the civil war period. Although, thanks to the insistence of the censor, in *Turbine Days* the revolution proved victorious in the end, not only by force of arms but morally as well, stalwarts regarded the play as counter-revolutionary because some of the White officers were sympathetically described. Again and again attempts were made to compel Stanislavsky to cut the piece out of his repertoire, but the old fellow stood his ground, declaring that he could not make ends meet at the theatre if this "draw" were prohibited. "Unless you give me a larger subsidy, I must continue to stage *Turbine Days*!"

Tairoff had to put up a similar fight before Bulgakoff's farce, *Red-hot Island*, which makes fun of the Soviet censorship, was approved. It was fortunate for the producer and the author that the censorship committee had just been dismissed and replaced by a new one, as the piece was obviously aimed at the worthies who had fallen into disfavour. Let me take this opportunity of admitting that considerable licence is allowed in the way of making fun of outgrowths of the system, provided always that its foundations are not challenged and that in the end "the good cause", that is to say, bolshevism, is triumphant. In *Red-hot Island*, the chief censor appears on the boards and forbids the production of a self-styled revolutionary sensational piece on the ground that, at the close, British tars and their officers run away from rebellious colonial negroes. As soon as the management has recovered from the first shock of the censor's utterance, it has the last act replayed, with the trifling change that there is now fraternisation between the indigens and the "proletarian" British bluejackets. Thereupon the censor promptly approves the revised drama. Since the whole affair is dressed up as grotesquely as possible, contempt

for the censorship is implied. Nevertheless the piece was endorsed with certain cuts and additions. When, however, there is even the shadow of a serious criticism of the Party and the system it embodies, the dramatic censorship shows an extremely petty spirit. In 1928 a young bolshevik playwright, Mihail Levidoff, submitted a play dealing with the disastrous fate of the French revolutionist and utopian communist Gracchus Babeuf, who, after the guillotining of Robespierre, had endeavoured to organise an opposition to the "Thermidorians", Barras and Co. His "*Conspiracy of the Equals*" was discovered before it was ripe, and the conspirators were executed. Levidoff felt, with good reason, that the figure of this communist opponent of the petty-bourgeois Thermidorians would be attractive to a Soviet audience. Since all the Russian theatres had received orders to celebrate the decennium of the bolshevik revolution by the production of revolutionary plays in November 1927, Levidoff offered his *Conspiracy of the Equals* to Tairoff for the occasion. The preliminary censor, having read the manuscript, raised no objections. Tairoff studied the play carefully, spared no expense on the production, and when everything was ready invited the censoring committee and the prominent members of the Party to the customary private performance, a private performance which bears the remarkable name of "Public Inspection".

Now some of the chief censors were a little dubious, but by a majority vote decided to approve the drama. The first night was fixed and the piece was widely advertised, with the result that the house was sold out in advance for a number of performances of the *Conspiracy of the Equals*. Meanwhile, however, the doubts of the censorial dignitaries had found expression in the higher regions of the Kremlin, whereupon the authorities insisted upon a second trial representation before an enlarged and even more important committee. This body, however, did not decide upon prohibition, so that November 17, 1927, was still looked forward to as the first

night. Then, on the evening of November 16th, the bomb burst. First by telephone, and afterwards in writing, a ukase issued by Stalin forbade the performance. The management complained that it stood to lose nearly 100,000 roubles. "Never mind, it will all be paid back to you!" came the reassuring answer. Some weeks later news arrived that the *Conspiracy of the Equals* had been played several times with great success in the municipal theatre at Tiflis. Further amazement in Moscow, and a renewed petition to be allowed to stage the piece there. The upshot was that the play was prohibited in Tiflis as well, and Tairoff's theatre had no play to celebrate the decennium of the bolshevik revolution.

For a long time the citizens of Moscow racked their brains in the attempt to discover why this Babeuf play was forbidden, and under such peculiar circumstances. At length the reason transpired. It had occurred to one of the wiseacres of the censorship to compare Babeuf to Trotsky—Babeuf the revolutionist ultra to Trotsky who likewise posed as an extreme revolutionist. The playwright glorified Babeuf, the champion of true communism, as the adversary of the "reformists", those who were diluting the revolutionary idea, the "Thermidorians", as Trotsky called Stalin and his henchmen. Nay more, in Levidoff's play Babeuf says to young General Bonaparte: "I don't like the expression in your eyes, General!" Trotsky had once said the same thing to Stalin. It was these parallels, dragged in by the hair of the head and signs of an uneasy conscience, which led to the prohibition of the piece. Let me add that only a part of the heavy expenses that had been incurred was refunded to the management.

To round off my picture of the bolshevik theatrical censorship, I shall append certain avowals made by a leading communist. In November 1925, Larin, a member of the Central Committee of the Party, announced in "Pravda" that the censorship had forbidden the performance of Schiller's *Maria Stuart* on the ground that it was a "religious and monarchist

one of Dostoevsky's novels had been disallowed, for the reason that the book "despite the author's talent", bore signs of religious prejudice. Then, in sarcastic comment, Larin inquired whether the performance of *Faust* was likely to be forbidden ere long, "despite the author's talent", since in this case "the religious prejudices of the poet went so far as to make him present an actual devil on the stage". Larin's philippic against the asinine behaviour of the censorship had (as the instances we have given from a later date show) no more effect than bolshevik "self-criticism" in other fields. In practice, narrow-mindedness and timidity rule the political roost, outweighing theoretical insight. Maxim Gorky, who for years has been trying to secure greater freedom for the imaginative writers of Soviet Russia, has likewise been unable to check the follies of the censorship. Of late, indeed, as a part of the new trend, as a part of the general radicalisation of the regime, the domination of the Soviet theatre by political considerations has made rapid progress. *Turbine Days* and *Red-hot Island* have, for instance, long since been unconditionally banned.

All the same, Russian dramatic art, sustained by lofty conditions and by the high significance of its educational work, is a sunny oasis amid the grey of bolshevik life. Besides the public theatres old and new, there are a great many amateur theatres throughout the country, and they enjoy official support. Even though the current fare is politically tinged, the drama helps to relieve the weariness of the daily round. Especially is this true of the young folk who are in close touch with Soviet theatrical enterprise. Moreover, the numerous theatres run by Young Communists, like most of the institutions under their control, are free, in great measure, from the shadow of mental and political oppression which darkens even the best achievements of the great play-houses. The "Blue Blouses" and the other theatrical societies and enterprises of the young are in the hands of those to whom bolshevik propaganda has become second nature—an impulse whose gratification is enjoyable like that of any other. To Young Communists the world of

the old regime is simply comic, and their whole mentality has grown aloof from the manifestations of fatigue and decadence that characterise young connoisseurs of art in the West. Although nothing genuinely creative can as yet be discerned in the artistic life of Young Russia, that life certainly manifests the fresh physical energies and vitality of the r The Party, moreover, is shrewd enough to encourage youthful enthusiasm and to turn it to bolshevik ends.

### 7. MUSIC IN SOVIET RUSSIA

To the credit side of the bolshevik account must also be placed the protection of music. There are many excellent orchestras in Soviet Russia, orchestras which will bear comparison with the great orchestras of the West. Soloists likewise receive every encouragement from the Red State. A foreigner with musical tastes need not grow weary for lack of good concerts in the great cities of Russia. One little concession to bolshevik ideology is that preference is given to unconduted orchestras, the most notable of which, the "Persymphans" of Moscow, is adjudged admirable by trustworthy foreign musical connoisseurs. Speaking generally, however, the Russian opera houses are not at their old level; or perhaps it would be juster to say that they are at their old level, but have stayed there, failing to advance with the times. New performances of grand opera which I have witnessed in Moscow were so antiquated in respect both of spirit and of form that they would never go down with a western European public. Orchestra and the chorus alike are as good as ever, but the soloists are long past their prime, and there seems to be no young talent fit to replace them. I find this as hard to explain as the lack of new Russian operas, seeing that opera is admirably adapted for conveying a message to the masses. Even better adapted for this, however, is ballet, a domain in which the Soviet spirit has unquestionably achieved something. I have the pleasantest memories of the revolutionary ballet *Red Poppy*:

tional revolutionary opera *Ivan the Soldier*. The attempts of the censorship to turn musical drama to Party account have hitherto been vain. When the announcements for the winter of 1925-1926 were published, the censor forbade the performance of Wagner's *Lohengrin* as an "unduly mystical" work, and the performance of Massenet's *Werther* on the ground that it was "irrational in our age to cultivate Werther whimsies". It was also proposed to cut out one of the scenes in Russia's national opera *Eugen Onegin*, because it "described the relations between landowners and serfs as idyllic". Iarin, the Party bow-wow, began, however, to bark loudly against this censorial philistinism, with the result that at least *Lohengrin* was approved. When considering the withdrawal of the prohibition we have to remember that some of the big guns in the Kremlin, including Stalin, are very fond of both opera and of ballet.

## CHAPTER THIRTEEN

### BOOK PRODUCTION IN SOVIET RUSSIA

#### 1. A COLOSSUS OF THE PUBLISHING WORLD

PREGNANT for the future, though not necessarily for the prevailing regime, is what the ruling Party has done in the literary field. Beyond question the mere reduction in illiteracy and the making of the masses acquainted with the manifestations of cultural life have enlarged the nation's spiritual horizon. Although for the present generation it may be a serious disadvantage that the educational policy of the bolsheviks is primarily selfish and purposive, it does not seem to me that these drawbacks will make themselves so strongly felt in the Russia of later years. Even though the contemporary proletariat has only become acquainted with the cinema, with books, and with periodicals when used as means for the dissemination of bolshevik views, this restriction of its political vision does not countervail the fact that the Soviet regime has provided it with enhanced cultural possibilities and has thereby intensified its critical faculties. Just as the cultivation of self-consciousness in the various nationalities of Russia is likely sooner or later to result in the manifestation of strong impulses for self-determination, so may the intellectual awakening of the lower strata of the population turn against those who have effected this awakening when, some day, their police-sustained authority collapses.

The Soviet government has called into being titanic apparatuses to convey book-learning to the masses. The biggest of these organisations is the "Gosizdat", the State Publishing Agency. This bureaucratic colossus of the publishing world has, on the plea of "rationalisation", extended its tentacles ever more widely, until it has come to make itself responsible for 50 per cent of the book production of Soviet Russia.

Every communist is intoxicated by the figures of the Gosizdat. During the first ten years of its existence it issued books and pamphlets to the number of 491,700,000 specimens, published 200 periodicals, and had the enormous turnover of 148,100,000 roubles (Appendix IX). It likewise controls from 25 to 30 per cent of the trade in paper, office requisites, and plaster casts. The real character of this trust is shown by the classification of its consumers. About 80 per cent of the gross production was taken over by State institutions, more than 10 per cent by the State-controlled cooperatives, more than 5 per cent by private companies, and only 5 per cent by direct individual consumers, that is to say by buyers in bookshops. This seems to me enough to indicate that the book production of the Gosizdat is essentially propagandist, being guided, not by the real demands of a real public, but by the wishes of the Bolshevik Party which stands behind the State and cooperative wholesale purchasers of printed matter. A glance at the contents of the numberless State bookshops of Russia will confirm this impression. In all of them we see the monotonous grey, yellow, and red of political and economic pamphlets, with a sprinkling of the works of the proletarian or semi-proletarian novelists of Russia and the western world.

The loquacious statistics of the Gosizdat furnish exhaustive information concerning the material foisted on the public by this gigantic concern. I take the following data from the announcements for 1926: textbooks, 40 per cent; social and economic literature, 6 per cent; the works of Lenin, 5 per cent; educational and propagandist literature, 20 per cent; peasant literature, 16 per cent; scientific literature, 5 per cent; popular science, 2 per cent; books for children, 2 per cent; belletristics and art, 4 per cent.

We learn from these statistics that less than 10 per cent of the total production, comprising works of science, belletristics, and art, is manifestly non-political. All the rest (and a considerable fraction of the belletristic and artistic works as well) is nothing but bolshevik propaganda. Recently Chalatoff,



chairman of the Gosizdat, has stated that the social and economic (read, propagandist) proportion of the total book production of the organisation ranges from 40 to 50 per cent. If this be so, its activities must have become considerably more political since 1926. In connexion with the foregoing figures, however, it has to be remembered that as far as the Gosizdat is concerned the publishing of belletristics is avowedly only a minor part of its activities. Taking those of other publishing organisations into account as well, we find that in the R.S.F.S.R. there were published during the year 1928, in round figures, belletristic works to the number of 15 million copies, comprising 90 million sheets—this being 17 per cent of the total book production in the Great Russian republic. The term "belletristic" is, however, an obscure one as used in these statistics, for there can be no doubt that some critical and publicistic works are included under the caption.<sup>1</sup> In the book announcements issued at the beginning of the year 1930 I was particularly impressed by the mention of a new Lenin book, whose first edition was to run to a million. It is a book, be it noted, not a mere pamphlet!

## 2. MORAL VICTORY OF PRE-REVOLUTIONARY LITERATURE

Enough of figures! In view of what has been said in earlier chapters, it is a matter of course that in the bolshevik State the work of book production should be primarily carried on in order to serve the political interests of that State. Let us turn to consider belles-lettres, which in other countries occupy the lion's share of the book market, and would do so in Russia as well if the market were free. The great majority of Russians in all strata of the population prefers to read belles-lettres rather than propagandist literature, and also prefers belles-lettres to the instructive works which come next after the political in the aggregate of the book production of the Soviet

<sup>1</sup> Appendix IX gives information regarding the prospects of book production under the Five-Year Plan.

realm. This is plainly shown by the roaring trade which second-hand bookshops and pedlars in the streets do in Russian and foreign novels. In any market to-day, when the mess is being cleared up, you can see men and women in proletarian dress hunting eagerly for fragments of the books of Russian classical writers and novelists of the old regime—books which the new State has entirely rejected or thrust into out-of-the-way corners. No doubt there are men of considerable ability among the Russian imaginative writers of to-day, to mention only the name of Sholohoff, Gladkoff, and Leonoff. But what, in the long run, makes them intolerable to the average Russian reader even more than to the foreign intellectual, is the perpetual harping on the same theme—or rather on three themes: first of all, the revolutionary struggle for the overthrow of tsarism, including reminiscences of prison life (the “katorga”), underground work (“podpolye”), and conspiracy; secondly, the happenings of revolutionary days and of the epoch of the civil war; and, thirdly, the “struggle for the new man” in the bolshevik present. These themes have been handled times without number, by able writers and by dunces, by idealists and by opportunists. They alone are smiled on by the censor and can therefore easily secure publication; so that they have become an even greater affliction to the Russian reader than were war books in our own land during the Great War.<sup>1</sup> Modern belletristics from foreign lands can only find a home in Russia when the fundamental tone is revolutionary. Even so, mentally enslaved Russia eagerly seeks what relief can be found in such evidences of the existence of another, a non-bolshevik world, regardless of the fact that these carefully selected foreign works present only a one-sided picture of the life of free countries. The books of Upton Sinclair, Jack London, and Henri Barbusse—very carefully sifted before import—constitute, side by side with the works of Russian revolutionary writers, the main part of State-approved

<sup>1</sup> I am not thinking here of the recent war books, which stand at a high literary level.

belletristics. Statistics show, however, that they are far less popular than the Russian classical writers. Not even Red statisticians venture to deny that Tolstoy, Dostoevsky, Turgenieff, Pushkin, Saltykoff (Shchedrin), and Verbitskaya (the Russian Courths-Mahler) are still the most widely read Russian authors. If you can arouse the confidence of a public librarian and induce him to give a frank opinion on the quiet, he will tell you that the reading public demands almost exclusively the works of such old favourites as these, and practically ignore the pandects concerning Lenin and Co. This being so, one may be puzzled to account for the fact that the vast flood of propagandist writings is absorbed by the book-buying world—the explanation, of course, being that the Party and the trade unions exert an overwhelming “intellectual” influence upon the “freest proletariat in the world”. It is because the semi-official literature is extremely unpopular and because when bought it is bought against the grain, that such quantities of clean and unread specimens of recently published works are to be found on street bookstalls. We foreigners can stock up with such new publications, and especially with the volumes of the complete edition of Lenin’s works still in progress, by purchasing these nominally “second-hand” copies at a fraction of the published price. While turning over the contents of such bookstalls, many of which are kept by persons who are almost if not quite illiterate, we often come across first editions of the German classics and can buy them for a song. Book production and distribution in Soviet Russia are, in fact, profoundly disorganised—although not disorganised from the outlook of the Bolshevik Party.

### 3. “GLAVLIT”

Supreme power in the Russian book trade is held by “Glavlit”, the Central Book Department, which is, *inter alia*, the censor of book printing. No manuscripts can find their way to the composing room without passing through the courts of this

literary inquisition. Nor does the censorship apply only to new works, for many of the Russian classics have been placed upon the Index. Unfortunately the Central Book Department is not frank enough to cry its "achievements" from the house-tops. Since the book trade is wholly subject to official control, the bolshevik book censorship is mainly conducted behind the scenes. As regards both books and newspapers, the examination of imports from abroad is extraordinarily strict. Every parcel of books, every page of every newspaper, that crosses the Soviet frontier has to make its way, if it can, through the fine-meshed net of the Glavlit, which is ruthlessly used to exclude whatever is regarded as undesirable. The simplest and most frequent procedure of this censorship is for the Glavlit to return a book or a newspaper to the sender, with the official stamp "Not Admitted". Often enough, however, the vandals of the Central Book Department simply tear disapproved pages or illustrations out of valuable works or make the incriminating passages unreadable by "blacking". Yet other volumes will disappear from public ken in the dark recesses of the Glavlit, this (in my experience) being especially prone to happen in the case of publications for which some of the high gods in Moscow can find a good use. Of the few foreign newspapers allowed to circulate in Russia, from five to ten issues will disappear on the average every month. One of the quaintest features of this form of press censorship is that the numbers containing articles penned by the foreign correspondents in Moscow are almost certain to be forbidden. Russian citizens must not be allowed to learn what foreign observers really think of the Soviet State—even though the censorship of telegrams before despatch, and the censorship of articles before admission, make the foreign correspondents use extremely mild terms.

But a still more effective way of preventing the contamination of the Soviet atmosphere by foreign intellectual products is the control of the monetary exchanges. For more than two years, now, the import and export of money have been absolutely

prohibited in Russia. A special permit is needed for every international financial transaction, no matter how small. Since, however, Russian science cannot get on without foreign literature, a special allowance of exchange provides for this particular import. In the year 1925 the amount was 3,000,000 roubles, but subsequently (in 1927, I think) it was reduced to 450,000 roubles. In 1929, it was increased, but only to 800,000 roubles. How small the allowance is can be gathered from the fact that in 1927 foreign books and music to the value of 15,000,000 marks were imported into Germany. Battle rages fiercely and unceasingly round this allowance for the import of foreign literature. Scientific and technical organisations, individual scientists, politicians, and economists, wrestle for a share of the pittance, struggling often for some particular book which is essential to their work. Of course the lion's share goes to the State libraries and other official organisations. It would be impossible for the reader to exaggerate in picturing to himself the hardships the regulation of literary imports involves for the unfortunate mental workers of Russia. Necessity being the mother of invention, the intellectual proletariat is always devising new expedients for tricking the censors and outwitting the dictators of the foreign exchanges. In this field, methods are used for idealistic purposes which in any other domain could only be stigmatised as roguery. Such being the circumstances, foreign learned institutions should do their utmost to help Russian colleagues by the exchange of books and periodicals.

But the great mass of Russians interested in matters intellectual are, for practical purposes, hopelessly cut off from the outer world. As far as belletristic and economic works are concerned, almost all the imports over and above the novels of the before-mentioned American authors are the publications of the communist book-producers in foreign lands. Russian bookshops are indeed oversupplied with the publications of the Malik Verlag, the Neuer Deutsche Verlag (Münzenberg), the Viva, and similar propagandist enterprises of the Communist

International. These imports scarcely need to be paid for by way of foreign exchange, seeing that there are so many ways of cooking the accounts.

#### 4. PARTY INSTRUCTIONS TO FICTION WRITERS

But the main directives concerning what Russian citizens may and must read are issued, not by the Glavlit, but by the Party management itself. In an ordinance issued by the Central Committee in January 1929 we read: "During the present period of socialist construction, there has been an enormous increase in the importance of the mass-book as an instrument for the organisation of the masses, for their communist education, and for the raising of their cultural level." Again: "Work in the domain of providing the masses with books must be resolutely intensified, not only by the publishing institutions, but also by all State, cooperative, and (especially) Party organisations. In view of the fact that the themes dealt with by books widely circulated among the masses are not at present satisfactory, the following steps are requisite: 1. Special attention must be paid to ensuring the circulation of popularly written books on Marxism and Leninism, on the history of the Bolshevik Party, and upon that to the revolutionary movement; 2. There must be an increase in the issue of the literature of industrial production, in order to enhance the technical knowledge of workers and peasants; 3. There must be a more extensive publication of works of popular science, of those dealing with the tasks of socialist construction, and of those tending to promote self-education; 4. There must be increased publication of belletristic literature, and especially of such as deals with contemporary political life and such as will tend to counteract the influence of the bourgeoisie and to overcome opportunism and slackness; 5. Great attention must be paid to making the mass-book as fully comprehensive as possible to broad circles of readers."

The propagandist aims of the Soviet book trade could

hardly be disclosed more clearly than they are disclosed in this ukase from the highest authority in Soviet Russia. I have quoted only the first sentences, but the decree contains another extremely instructive passage commanding that an attempt shall be made to train popular authors in the universities and Party seminaries. This ordinance of a very recent date cannot but remind us of the "laboratory of word-chemistry" and the Bryusoff Institute in the heyday of bolshevik effort to use literature for political purposes, when the art of poetry was being taught in elementary schools and the idea that poets needed inspiration was being stigmatised as a bourgeois prejudice. No doubt attempts to produce prose writers and poets from among the lowest, the illiterate, or semi-illiterate strata of the population are extremely interesting, but it is superfluous to go into the matter in any detail inasmuch as imaginative writers genuinely sprung from the workers or the peasants have played no notable part in the book production of the Soviet Union, although so much hubbub has been made about them for propaganda purposes. In a few cases the search gave good results, but the mass of the younger Russian men of letters are mentally of much the same calibre as the younger men of letters in the West. As is natural, however, in a country which is in many respects so young, the bohemian trend in Young Russian writing is even stronger than in the West, and the Party has had to face many anxieties in connexion with its youthful literary aspirants, for these, having been taught to regard themselves as indispensable, take liberties which no one else would be granted in the Red police State.

##### 5. "MAHAGONI"

Among such awkward customers in literature Boris Pilnyak may be mentioned. A few years earlier, Pilnyak had roused a good deal of attention by a tale dealing with the supposedly violent death of Frunze, Commissary for War. In 1929 he

wrote a story entitled *Mahagoni*, giving an unvarnished account of latter-day conditions in the Russian provincial regions. Although for years Moscow has prided itself upon the freedom of "bolshevik self-criticism", no Soviet periodical ventured to accept Pilnyak's book as a feuilleton. Undismayed by this, the author had the bold idea of offering his work to the publishing house Petropolis run in Berlin by Russian refugees. The book was accepted, published, and cost the author dear. B. Volin, at that time deputy manager of the press section of the Soviet government, a trusted sleuth-hound for nosing out undesirable opinions and a great manufacturer of scandal, opened the campaign against Pilnyak in the "Literaturnaya Gazeta", combining this with an onslaught on the well-known Russian writers Samyatin and Ilya Ehrenburg, who had also dared to publish novels through the instrumentality of Russian publishing houses in foreign lands. Thereupon, following Volin's lead in a way characteristic of the lack of mental freedom in Red Russia, the whole Soviet press joined in a hue and cry against the unfortunate authors—although hardly any of them had read a line of *Mahagoni*. As a result, Pilnyak was expelled from the Authors' League, though he had been its chairman, and notwithstanding the fact that such notable authorities as Maxim Gorky and Karl Radek pleaded for milder measures (though in very cautious terms). This affair took place in 1929. A few years earlier *Mahagoni* would have been less harshly judged, and, indeed, we know that the publication of the Frunze tale did the author no serious harm.

The Pilnyak affair gives evidence of the steadily increasing radicalisation of the regime, and, which is worse, of its progressive spiritual impoverishment. Just as in the other fields of artistic creation, such as architecture, painting, and sculpture, we can unquestionably detect a paralysis of the creative faculty in Soviet Russia, so, under the Soviet system, does the world of authorship incline more and more to purge itself of all "outsiders"—this meaning all persons of independent mind, all those with strongly individual characters who refuse to



bow their necks beneath the yoke of the principle of sociological utility as inculcated from the Party standpoint. Such writers as Sobol, Yesenin, and Mayakovsky (recent suicides, all of them) have become anachronisms in the Soviet Russia of to-day. It is characteristic of the commonplace, I might almost say the mentally reactionary flavour of Stalinist Russia, that such persons are spoken of abusively as anarchists. The only concession still made to the artistic creation of to-day is to allow the use of a cheap symbolism, like that to which Meyerhold has recently returned. Plays of such a quality as *The Bud* show how literary Russia has been forced into a blind alley. The flower of art cannot thrive in the atmosphere of the Five-Year Plan.

## CHAPTER FOURTEEN

### THE PRESS MONOPOLY

#### I. BLINKERS

THEIR monopoly of the printing presses and the publishing houses gives the bolsheviks unchallenged command of the "sixth great power", the periodical press. They really had no occasion to follow the example of other dictatorial States of the past and present and to muzzle the press by a system of censorship, seeing that all non-bolshevik periodicals were suppressed at the outset, while in place of them the titanic apparatus of the Soviet press was established. Furthermore, by subsidies to foreign communist newspapers, the western world has likewise been flooded with a never-failing inundation of bolshevik journals. The number of daily papers published in Russia has increased fourfold since the outbreak of the revolution. From the governmental journals published in Moscow in editions numbered by the hundred thousand down to the tiny industrial and village newspapers, the deluge of the Red press makes its way among all the fibres of the Russian national body, being irresistible in its effects, since there is no other daily reading matter and therefore no standard of comparison for the Soviet citizens. Imagine that the only newspapers published in Germany were of the quality of "Die Rote Fahne" of Berlin, and examine a few numbers taken at random to learn for yourself what sort of pictures of the world you would get if you had nothing else to read. That will enable you to understand what it has meant for the Russian people to see only bolshevik newspapers for the last thirteen years.

#### 2. A DISCOURSE ON LIBERTY

Such being the facts, it is childish of bolshevik propagandists to talk about lack of freedom of the press in "bourgeois"

States. They tell us that there can be no freedom of the press in the capitalist world, for the reason that the bourgeoisie, the dominant class, owns the printing presses and paper factories, "turning to its own account the services of journalists, buying printing houses, and corrupting newspapers" (Lenin). No doubt such things happen, but every child in Germany knows that, in addition to the newspapers which (usually without making any bones about the matter) represent particular interests, there is a multitude of genuinely independent journals. The plainest proof that—except in Russia—a large measure of liberty for the press obtains in the western world, is the existence of communist periodicals in "bourgeoisdom"; of Red journals which, despite frequent suppressions and prosecutions, continue to enjoy an amazing measure of freedom to incite and to revile. Should any newspaper in Soviet Russia venture to bring out but one number attacking and black-guarding the Soviet Government in the way in which, day after day, the German bolshevik papers attack the republican government of Germany, all the editors would have been shot within twenty-four hours or would be on their way to the Siberian forests.

Simple-minded foreign proletarians visiting Moscow on the occasion of the decennial celebrations put the following question to Stalin: "Why is there no freedom of the press in the Soviet Union?" The dictator rejoined: "Which sort of freedom of the press do you mean? Freedom of the bourgeois or of the proletarian press? Certainly there is no freedom of the bourgeois press so long as the dictatorship of the proletariat is in being. But there is no other country in the world in which the proletarian press enjoys so universal and so wide a freedom as in the Soviet union." Well, the struggle with the opposition has shown the true quality of this alleged freedom of the proletarian press. What infuriated such bolshevik veterans as Trotsky more than anything else was that year after year they were refused opportunities of expressing their opinions in the press. "Give us a chance to voice our views!"

was the perpetual cry of the opposition. When, at long last, and no doubt thanks to the pressure of "public opinion" within the Party, it became expedient to take off the muzzle for a while and to allow those who had been condemned in advance to speak, the following preposterous plan was adopted. For four weeks a so-called "discussion issue" was appended to "Pravda", the official Party organ. In this supplement appeared the speeches and the articles of members of the opposition, whose arguments and allegations were ridiculed and plucked to pieces in the simultaneous ordinary issue of the journal. The comedy was opened by "Pravda" with the following remark: "In reply to certain rumours to the effect that the Central Committee has refused Comrades Trotsky and Zinovieff the chance for expressing their opinions freely in the Party nuclei and in the press, the editorial committee of 'Pravda' hereby declares that all such rumours are malicious inventions." This comedy of the "discussion issue" was revived in May and June 1930, in the case of the Right opposition, just before the Sixteenth Party Congress, when for more than a year Rykoff, the chairman of the Union Council of People's Commissaries, had been refused opportunity for writing a word in any of the Soviet newspapers.

### 3. A PEEPHOLE INTO THE WORLD

The newspaper censorship does not merely suppress news whose publication would be disagreeable to those in power, but actually sifts out and rejects everything which is not of positive value to the regime. Few and far between, therefore, in the Soviet press, are news items and articles of general interest but devoid of political content. Even the by-ways of the press, such as feuilletons, sporting columns, the accounts of technical matters, artistic criticisms, etc., are crowded with political traffic. You may look through nine or ten issues of a Soviet newspaper without finding a single article devoid of political trend. What has happened beyond the Red frontiers is

only recorded in the Soviet press if the news can be turned to useful account by the bolsheviks. Even matters of world-wide importance (I am not thinking of glove-fights or trans-atlantic aviation) are so effectively excluded by the Soviet journals that not a ripple or an echo enters the great isolation barrack which passes by the name of Russia. Characteristic of the attitude of the Soviet press towards the foreign world is a little corner in the widely circulated Moscow journal "Vechernyaya Moskva"—three or four inches of one column—published under the caption "From Everywhere about Everything". Here you will find the briefest items informing the readers of the paper what has contributed to a pro-bolshevik or anti-bolshevik policy in the outer world. This is the Moscow citizen's peephole into those wide regions of non-Russian life that have now become a mystery to him. The wearing of blinkers makes the Soviet press extraordinarily monotonous, and the evil is magnified by the lack of what we in the West regard as necessary editing. It is true that the great Russian newspapers are made up in such a way as to give an appearance of variety, and those published rather for intellectuals than for the broad masses are readable and well arranged. But when you look into details you will find little more than a mass of verbatim reports of speeches, interminable resolutions, texts of new laws, Party programmes. Ninety per cent of these "newspapers" are in actual fact composed exclusively of State documents; the minutes of Party proceedings; reports of and articles relating to the numberless congresses, sessions, meetings; and memorials concerning the schemes for future developments which play so large a part in the public life of contemporary Russia.

The bolsheviks, many of whom are able journalists, are well aware of the grey monotony of their press. They do their best to spice the flavourless contents by the artifices of literary style. Superlatives play a great part in Soviet jargon, the arid material being presented in all the splendour of oriental phraseology. Some idea of this tone which is so alien to western

taste can be gleaned from a study of the communist press in foreign lands; but, to the honour of the newspapers of Soviet Russia, it must be stated that only the minor working-class periodicals and those published in out-of-the-way parts of the provinces vie with the "Rote Fahne" of Berlin in violence of invective and preposterous verbiage, for the greater Soviet organs stand on a somewhat higher intellectual level than this. Still, their guiding spirits seem to be convinced that a statement is more likely to be believed if it is repeated very often and in stentorian tones. Such is the method used for hammering bolshevik ideas and trends into the brains of those whose only reading is these propagandist journals. Inasmuch as the bolshevik iteration (in many cases persistently mendacious) has made a definite impression upon the workers of other lands during the ten or twelve years of Communist Party rule, it would be worth while to collect and analyse the customary phrases of Red press propaganda, which amount, in one form or another, to only about a dozen in all. I must content myself here, however, with a study of the much-vaunted bolshevik "self-criticism", with which is associated an insistence upon "bolshevik progress".

#### 4. "SELF-CRITICISM"

Whenever a foreign observer tells his bolshevik acquaintances that their press seems to him vitiated by its bias and its injustice, there comes as a ready answer: "It is true that we tell our proletariat a great deal about our achievements to date, but where in the foreign press will you find such a volume of self-criticism, so keen an interest in public affairs, and so candid a discussion as you find in the journals of Soviet Russia?" Unquestionably the Soviet newspapers abound in complaints about the inefficiency of governmental and municipal institutions, in demands for more effective achievement, in pilloryings of individuals mentioned by name, ranging in position from simple workers up to leading officials of the State. It has always

been a surprise to me why so many of the anti-bolshevik propagandists in foreign lands draw their materials from obscure sources, or simply invent them, when it would be so easy to subscribe to a Soviet newspaper in which from day to day information regarding the actual defects of the bolshevik regime is published. Nevertheless this ostensibly fierce "self-criticism" is substantially invertebrate, is merely a form of window-dressing.

Before dilating on that point, I must say a word or two about "bolshevik progress". Foreign critics have, in general, failed to draw attention to the way in which, in Soviet Russia, the most trifling achievements of the nation, the municipality, and even the individual, are proclaimed from the housetops. If a new sheet-iron public urinal is put up in one of the streets of Moscow, the matter is solemnly recorded in the columns of the Soviet press, not once only, but many times. Readers are informed when it is planned, when the expenditure is approved by the authorities, when the erection is begun, and when the convenience is inaugurated. If in one month a Soviet factory turns out two or three hundred yards more cotton cloth than during the previous month, a great to-do is made about the matter, and of course detailed accounts are published concerning the few thousand working-class tenements which are built from year to year. All this Soviet progress, all these Soviet achievements, about which there is so much talk in foreign lands as well as in Russia, would seem as nothing if weighed in the scales against the social and economic advances effected in the West day by day, week by week, and year by year without any boasting. No doubt under the bolshevik banner much has been done which signifies progress for Russia, and some things have been achieved by which the foreign world would do well to take example—but the way in which Russian communists seem intoxicated by the grandeur of their own deeds puts even the self-admiration of the fascists in the shade.

Let us turn now to "self-criticism". What is criticised?

We will begin at the lower levels. Workman Ivanoff, who during the month of May has been drunk seven times and has therefore failed on as many days to turn up at his job. The ticket-clerk Petroff, who has been rude to a passenger. The engineer Pavloff, whose designs are said to have been defective and to have led to the loss of many working hours. The trust Red Dawn, because it has sent butter abroad in dirty tubs. The grain-buying cooperative Illehoprodukt, because it has been competing with the cooperative Illebocentr. The Party member Iivostoff, because he has been drinking vodka with the kulak Klopoff; and Anyushka, a Young Communist, because, clandestinely, she has been married in church. No doubt there is good ground for much self-criticism of this sort, self-criticism of Soviet life, to spur on the slackers in a regime where free competition is lacking. In large measure, however, it is but commonplace denunciation. It is a result of the activities of those unpleasant persons who are termed "informers". During my personal experience in Moscow I have known of many instances in which such "self-criticism", that is to say denunciation in the press, has been promptly followed by arrests, even in cases in which there have been mere errors of omission alleged, and there was no question of grave dereliction. It is a characteristic feature of self-criticism of this kind that those criticised and pilloried are very rarely members of the Party; and in the exceptional instances in which a communist is thus publicly censured, one can be sure that the Party leaders have some reason for wanting "to get their knife into him". Self-criticism is conducted in such a way that every non-Party member shudders to see his name in print. We have here one of the subtlest means by which the bolsheviks terrorise the people at large.

### 5. INFORMERS

Denunciations in the press are, above all, the work of a very remarkable group of correspondents, known as worker corre-



spondents, village correspondents, or factory correspondents, who, the bolsheviks proudly assure us, are numbered by the hundred thousand. Confiding in the ignorance of the foreign world, bolshevik propagandists do not hesitate to declare that the inauguration of this evil system is one of their greatest achievements. Doubtless the system contains a sound core. It is a good thing that the readers of a newspaper should be stimulated to active cooperation, and attempts of the kind have long since been inaugurated in foreign lands, but they have never been so extensively and so shrewdly carried out as in Soviet Russia. But, as with almost every pie in which the bolsheviks have their fingers, this institution of worker correspondents, village correspondents, and factory correspondents has assumed an unwholesome complexion, has become a sort of moral infection, so that the "correspondents" have degenerated into common informers. One can hardly be surprised that, in existing circumstances, strings are frequently pulled to influence worker correspondents and village correspondents for private ends. Let me give an instance. At Novosibirsk in Western Siberia a Soviet newspaper entitled the "Landmann" is published in the German language. Its readers are German peasants who, to the number of about 80,000, have during the last thirty years settled in the region. The "Landmann" is their only newspaper. I have before me the issue of August 2, 1926. The contributions of the village correspondents appear under the caption "Aus den Kolonien", this corresponding to the "Local News" of a German newspaper. Here are the items seriatim. The chairman of a meeting held in the village of Boslavino and a woman who attended the meeting (also mentioned by name) are attacked because they did not allow a Young Communist to finish his speech. This is signed "One who Saw and Heard". The next item, likewise anonymously signed "Village Correspondent", tells us that in the village of Sholtenka, where a young woman had entered into a liaison with a married man, the lads of the village had seized the girl, pulled her skirt up over her head,

and in this dishabille tied her to a tree. After a dig at the clergy, the correspondent goes on to write (with the spurious pathos characteristic of a lewd-minded informer): "Young men! Young men! Was that moral behaviour?" The next correspondent, signing himself "Freedom", reports with much indignation from the village of Dolinovka that three elders of the church, whose names are given, had delivered a moral harangue to "a couple living in a free union". Then, once more anonymous, comes a second item from Boslavino, in which Comrade So-and-so is attacked for having failed at a meeting to give questioners an exhaustive explanation of what socialism really is. From Sofievka an anonymous correspondent demands that M. Klippenstein, a woman quack, shall be sent to prison. From the same place "An Observer" reports that youths prefer drinking samogon (illicitly distilled vodka) to joining the Communist Youth organisation "where they could be trained to become useful citizens". The next correspondent, writing from Silberfeld and not signing his letter at all, tells of the family life of the Harders, who flogged their children, until, as the writer records with satisfaction, the eldest son snatched the stick from his father's hand and "gave his step-mother a good trouncing". From the village of Nepefeld, "Falcon Eye" reports that the labour community founded by Citizen G. Pambavsky spends most of its time in playing cards and in drinking. The anonymous correspondent from the village of Rosenfeld tells of two peasants, Stenke and Hagen, who without authorisation procured wood from the communal forest, and he blames Sück, the forester, for not having instigated a prosecution against the two thieves. Another anonymous correspondent, writing about the remote farm of Baronsk, gives gratuitously unpleasant information regarding a peasant named Wendel who, when illicitly distilling vodka, had scalded his genital organs. "A Traveller" informs the authorities that there are good reasons for their making an exhaustive inquiry into the business affairs of the cooperative store in the village of Novo-Usensk. The last contribution but one discusses

whether prices of admission ranging from 5 to 10 copecks are too high for a travelling cinema. The last item of all, describing the growth of weeds in a plot of communal land, is likewise distinguished by containing no personal denunciation.

This true picture of the famous "village correspondence" should suffice. Still, any one who might fancy that I have chosen a particularly delectable example, and that the other Soviet newspapers must be better than this, needs only glance at a number of the "Rabochaya Moskva", and he will find that the factory correspondents are just as bad. The only difference is that in the towns the consequences for those pilloried are much graver than for the peasants in a Siberian village, which is miles upon miles from the nearest centre of governmental authority, and where there is not likely to be even one communist village councillor to show his claws. All the same, during my peregrinations through the German villages of Siberia every peasant to whom I spoke was extremely indignant with the "Landmann".

At the Third All-Russian Congress of Rabselkori (worker and village correspondents), held at Moscow in May 1926, the anger aroused by this aspect of the correspondent system was very plainly disclosed. Although there was an inclination to take the line that only the so-called rich peasants and other anti-Soviet elements in the rural population took umbrage at the denunciations, there were voices to demand more conscientiousness and sincerity on the part of the correspondents. A report published by one of the government departments in connexion with the aforesaid congress shows that the worker correspondents and village correspondents work hand in hand with the police system of Soviet Russia. Herein we read: "Recently, thanks to the reports of the rabselkori, 606 persons have been prosecuted, 102 persons have been deprived of their positions, and 400 distraints have been levied. Thanks to 1,496 news items, various defects in the work of the authorities and of public enterprises were made known." Information was also given to the congress regarding the number of mur-

derous attacks made upon press spies. During the first four months of the year 1926, we learn that 24 correspondents had been murdered, and that unsuccessful attempts to murder ten others had been made. Acts of vengeance of this kind (be it noted that in many cases the news items sent in by the correspondents have themselves been acts of vengeance) are very severely punished by the authorities. For instance, in Western Siberia alone during the latter half of the year 1928, death sentences to the number of 24 were passed upon "rich peasants" for murderous attacks upon correspondents and other officials. A circular issued by the central Council of the Soviet Trade Unions towards the end of August 1928 urged the trade unions to take more energetic measures for the defence of the worker correspondents; and at the same time indicated that it was not necessary to await incontrovertible proof of enmity, for a mere suspicion was enough. Now, any one with the most elementary knowledge of conditions in Soviet Russia can realise that these newspaper correspondents would not need such special safeguards if they had won the sympathy of the workers and peasants, seeing that the protection enjoyed by all persons who have official status is, under normal conditions, sufficiently effective to frustrate the ill-will and avert the onslaughts of a few malcontents.

## 6. HOW TO "GET ON"

Every worker correspondent or village correspondent who has been assaulted because of his journalistic activities has an excellent chance of advancement. In one instance, at least, two crafty young fellows tried to turn this possibility to account by "faking" an assault of the kind. Slezarenko, correspondent in a town on the shores of the Black Sea, induced a friend of his, a land-worker named Koshcheeff, on the night of June 30, 1928, to stab him in the back with a knife, and then went to the authorities with the tale that he had been murderously assaulted by seven persons whose ill-doings

he had exposed in the two journals to which he supplied news items. The fraud came to light, however, and the offenders were severely punished. The Soviet law-courts have sometimes passed exemplary sentences in other instances of gross fraud by correspondents. Nevertheless the system remains rotten to the core, as is plainly shown by the fact that the Party leaders find it necessary to make unceasing efforts to mitigate the evils of this journalistic espionage, and also by the fact that, despite all the attempts to protect correspondents in their unsavoury occupation, the number of assaults upon them is steadily increasing. According to a statement published by "Pravda" in the beginning of June 1929, in October 1928 there were 195 terrorist assaults; in November, 210; and in December, 337. I think there can be little doubt that the majority of the victims of these outrages were "Rabselkori". We have to remember, however, that "Pravda", when compiling the statistics, used the term "terrorist assaults" in a very wide sense, the main object being to provide justification for retaliatory measures in the form of official terrorism.

It would be unjust to contend that the bolshevik press monopoly works exclusively for evil. Even though the Soviet press is run primarily if not exclusively for the benefit of the Bolshevik Party, as a side issue it does good service to popular education. Whereas before the war the total circulation of all the daily newspapers amounted in round figures to only two and a half millions, in March 1928 the total circulation was close upon twelve millions. This shows how important a part daily papers now play in Russian civilisation. Furthermore, the Soviet newspapers are adapted, if not to the taste, at any rate to the cultural level of the common people, so that they can be read and understood by the masses. The only exceptions to this statement are the two great newspapers published in Moscow, "Izvestia", the governmental organ, and "Pravda", the chief Party paper. Of the 692 daily papers circulating in Russia at the beginning of the year 1930, only 441 were published in the Great Russian tongue, the remaining 251

appearing in one or other of the languages of the national minorities—a fact which underlines what I wrote in an earlier chapter concerning the Soviet policy towards the national minorities. In this matter, as in everything where propaganda comes into play, the methods of the Soviet authorities are unrivalled in respect of skill, energy, and shrewdness. Leaving its tendency to gross exaggeration out of account, the Soviet press is an admirable instrument for the maintenance and extension of the bolshevik power. A study of the foreign communist press, whose preposterous bias and one-sidedness make it positively ludicrous in a free and multiform world, must not lead us to draw erroneous conclusions as to the significance of the Soviet press for Russia. There (let me repeat) this press is a sort of Holy Writ as to which since the revolution of November 1917 the Russian reading public has had no objective standard of judgment.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> An excellent and exhaustive treatise on the Soviet press has recently appeared, *Die Presse der Sowjetunion*, by Arthur W. Just, Berlin, 1931.



*BOOK FIVE*

THE INSTRUMENTS OF SOVIET  
AUTHORITY





## CHAPTER FIFTEEN

### SOVIET JUSTICE

#### I. LAW AS THE EXPRESSION OF THE CLASS STRUGGLE

I THOUGHT it advisable to describe the mental enslavement of the Russian people under the bolshevik dominion as a preliminary to this section in which I shall deal with the actual instruments of Soviet authority, with law, police, etc., inasmuch as the former seems to me far more dangerous, notwithstanding the various advantages entailed by the bolshevik educational policy—advantages I have not been slow to admit. In passing I should like to inquire how the present rulers in Moscow can explain the fact that in most European countries, where, according to them, the great majority of the workers are exploited and kept in thrall by a small minority of bourgeois parasites, these same workers enjoy extensive freedoms in the cultural and publicist domains, whereas in Soviet Russia “where the working population governs itself through the soviets”, there prevails a spiritual serfdom even worse than that which characterised Spain in the days of the Inquisition. What is the world at large to think of the moral consequences of bolshevik rule in Russia when, during the second decade of the victorious revolution, this muzzling of the intelligence is becoming more and more inexorable—as was plainly shown by the treatment of the opposition in the Party and by the antireligious campaign of the year 1930? A similar question as to the use of the instruments of Soviet authority will force itself upon our attention at the close of the present book.

When we speak of “law” in the Soviet State, we are hampered by one of the inevitable limitations of linguistic usage, for the reason that there is no word in English, French, or German which can fitly describe Soviet Russian “legal” theory and practice. There is no law in the Soviet State.

There are only regulations to facilitate the use of police measures for carrying on the class struggle (read: for maintaining and expanding the bolshevik dictatorship). The bolshevik leaders have never seriously contended that law in the western sense of the term exists in Russia. If they find it expedient to use the traditional juristic terminology for their police rule, it is only because they want to hide from their own people or from foreigners the naked political purposiveness of their police practice. Communist doctrine utterly repudiates the concept of law, insofar as law is to be regarded as an independent reality or an idealistic demand. Lenin's main contribution to communist thought was the cleansing of Marxism from the last vestiges of Hegelian idealism, and this was what severed him and his followers from the social democrats.

According to the bolsheviks, law is only an instrument for maintaining the dominion of the ruling class over the subjugated classes. That is what the Soviet leaders mean when they speak of the "laws" of the Soviet State. In the bourgeois State, they say, bourgeois class law prevails, and equality before the law exists only among the exploiters; in the Soviet State, on the other hand, proletarian class law prevails and (so we are told) there is equality before the law for all workers.

The legal ideology of the Russian communists, which is purely utilitarian, is plainly manifested in the introductory paragraph of the decrees concerning criminal law issued by the People's Commissariat for Justice in the year 1919: "1. Law is the system (the regulation) of special relationships, a system which corresponds to the interests of the ruling classes and is safeguarded by their own organised power. 2. Criminal law comprises the legal norms and other legal measures whereby the system of social relationships of the ruling stratum of classes is protected by repressive measures (punishment) against infringement (crime). 3. The aim of Soviet criminal law is, by the use of repressive measures, to protect that system of social relationships which corresponds to the interests of the working masses, who, during the period of the dictator-

ship of the proletariat and the transition to communism, have organised themselves as the ruling class."

## 2. KRYLENKO'S THESES

Ten years later, Krylenko, the father and protagonist of Soviet justice, public prosecutor and vice-commissary for justice compiled theses on the reform of criminal law. I quote the following sentences to show that there has been no change in the views of 1919, which are as clear as they are absurd. "Nailing to the counter the audacious lie of bourgeois class society, which denies the class-war character of its criminal law, the proletarian State, when formulating its own criminal code, must be guided by only one practical aim, the idea of the self-defence of the State and of society against criminals. By this we understand likewise the waging of the class war, the self-defence of proletarian society against its class enemies and against the untrustworthy elements among the workers. The neutralisation of the criminal element (and in the last resort the physical destruction of the most dangerous amongst them), together with the adaptation of those who remain adaptable to the conditions of the working community—these are the chief methods to be used in the fight against crime."

Such bolshevik avowals show, not merely the repudiation of any and every ethical concept of law, but also that the most elementary principle of modern jurisprudence (equal rights for all) is systematically despised. Nor is this line taken as a mere matter of theory, as will be seen from the paragraph I quote from the "Elements of Criminal Legislation" issued on October 31, 1924. "Aggravating circumstances:....b, when the offence is committed by a person who has been in the past or is in the present connected with the class of those who exploit others' labour....Extenuating circumstances:....b, when the offence has been committed by a worker or a working peasant." The following example will show how these principles

take effect in practice. In June 1927 the Kuban district court sentenced a young man to two years' imprisonment for the rape of a peasant girl. In the following November, the court of appeal referred the case back to the district court because the latter had failed to take into account the fact that the offender was employed as a farm servant by the father of the girl, and it was possible that the charge brought by the father "might have arisen out of the working relationships between employer and employed". Translated out of the jargon of Soviet justice, the decision of the court of appeal signified in plain language that the sentence was to be annulled because the offender committed the act of rape upon the daughter of his employer and class enemy.

To return to Krylenko's theses, this confession of bolshevik legal faith is a splendid example of Marxian dialectic. Starting from the plain fact that, despite amnesty after amnesty, the Russian prisons were packed to bursting, his first contention is (in flat defiance of one of the main principles of modern criminal jurisprudence) that the system of short terms of imprisonment for minor offences is invalid. He maintains—rightly as far as contemporary Russian conditions are concerned—that a short term of imprisonment is fruitless, and he therefore advocates various other ways of dealing with petty offenders, such as reproof, public reprimand, censure by the press, a term of penal employment at the old place of work or dwelling, a spell of some particularly disagreeable labour, confiscation of property, discharge with a caution, prohibition of the practice of some particular occupation, a compulsory change of domicile. For graver offences of a "socially injurious" character, Krylenko would enrich the list of punitive measures by penal labour in workhouses of a special type, in out-of-the-way places, or in concentration camps. A second group of offences are those termed by Krylenko "socially dangerous", and for these it is essential that the evildoer should be isolated from society. For such crimes there must be imprisonment for terms ranging from two to five years. In these cases a conditional discharge

with liability to come up for sentence if called upon is considered utterly inadequate. On the contrary, after the expiry of a term of imprisonment, the offender must for a time (ranging up to five years) be deported to some remote place, and even then must be forbidden to return to his previous place of residence until another term of perhaps five years has elapsed. Finally, for the "most dangerous" offences, Krylenko demands "physical annihilation", that is to say death by shooting, as the only effective means of social self-defence. This punishment by death is essential in the case of the "most dangerous enemies of the working-class and the systematic disorganisers of the working community".

### 3. "AN ESSENTIAL PIQ"

With puritanical rigour the last vestiges of bourgeois legal ideology are to be expunged from bolshevik criminal law. Such concepts as moral guilt, an evil will, chastisement, retribution, make Krylenko queasy. The criminal offender is not a sinner, is not blameworthy; he is merely the product of his environment, of the class State. Krylenko, a clear and logical thinker and one of the most interesting personalities among the surviving bolsheviks of the Old Guard, does not hesitate, in these theses of his, to reiterate the most utopian article of the Marxian creed, writing, "Nothing but the annihilation of the class structure of society will, in accordance with Marxian theory, make an end of crime once for all". Pushing to a relentless extreme the bolshevik amoral conception of jurisprudence, Krylenko makes short work of the window-dressing which has hitherto been characteristic of Soviet practice in matters of criminal law. He will not admit that punishment can have an educative effect, writing: "The proletarian theory of criminal law must sever itself sharply from those theories according to which the improvement of the criminal is to be the chief end and aim of the struggle against crime." The only criminals capable of improvement

are those of proletarian or semi-proletarian origin! On the platform here adopted by Krylenko stood an outspoken communist I met in the provinces, who countered all my objections to the theory of the class struggle with the formula: "The bourgeois is an essential pig."

The categorical denial of any moral basis for law necessarily leads Krylenko to the most extravagant of his demands, that for an indeterminate sentence. When the nature of the crime and the nature of the criminal furnish no trustworthy standard for the appraisal of the latter's social dangerousness, the court is to pass sentence for a term of punishment nominally small but really indeterminate, its length (imprisonment plus deportation plus prohibition of a return to the old place of residence) being dependent upon the behaviour of the prisoner or deportee and upon the appearance of indications of his having undergone a "social transformation". The duration of the punishment is to depend, not only upon the conduct of the offender after sentence, but also upon the general political and social condition of the country. Krylenko holds that a criminal who may not have been a very dangerous person at the time when sentence was passed, may, through a change in political circumstances, become extremely dangerous, and in that case the period of his detention must be increased. As a transitional form to the indeterminate sentence, Krylenko recommends that the court should have the power to impose a supplementary term of imprisonment or deportation whenever the behaviour of the convict seems to render this desirable.

Krylenko's proposals for legal reform, which already existed in the germ in the legal code of Soviet Russia, were of such a character as to deprive the Soviet citizen of all legal safeguards. In place of a clearly defined relationship between crime and punishment there were to be the vaguest of specifications regarding three vast and fancifully delimited groups of crimes.

The removal of any upper limit for the term of punishment applicable to a specified offence makes it possible for the Soviet law-courts to be as arbitrary as they please, and the danger

is intensified by the elastic notion of "social dangerousness". Nay more, the actual determination of the period of restraint can only be decided by the law-courts *pro forma*, inasmuch as they cannot study the "social" development of the convicts except through the spectacles of the executive officers of the penal system. In a word, the ultimate decision as to the term of imprisonment rests mainly in the hands of the prison authorities.<sup>1</sup>

The most dangerous of Krylenko's theses were embodied in the Soviet legal code on January 28, 1929. By a decree of the presidium of the Central Executive Committee, the law-courts were given the right to inflict supplementary terms of imprisonment on persons whose "social dangerousness" had not undergone modification while they were in prison. In lieu of extension of the term of imprisonment, the offender might be deported. Furthermore some new paragraphs were added to the code providing a substantial foundation for the idea of the indeterminate sentence, and empowering the courts to order, instead of imprisonment for a specified term, imprisonment for a term ranging (for instance) from five to eight years.

#### 4. CLASS JUDGES

No less peculiar are the specifications regarding the composition of the Soviet law-courts. In this matter, likewise, the bolsheviks have disregarded the principles of modern criminal jurisprudence. The judges in the law-courts of contemporary Russia are neither independent nor irremovable. Having been nominated by provincial law-courts and the supreme legal authorities, they are elected for a year's term of office by the provincial executive committees of the Soviet. Since they can be cashiered at any time, they are entirely in the hands of the

<sup>1</sup> I am indebted to Professor Reinhard Frank, the well-known professor of criminal jurisprudence at Munich, for pointing out to me that Krylenko's theories are not original, being implicit in the teachings of Lombroso (1836-1909) and his school.



authorities, which means the Party. No preliminary legal training is required in the case of a bolshevik judge or magistrate. It is a sufficient qualification that the candidate for judicial office should have worked for several years in a Party bureau or in a municipal, trade-union, or other working-class organisation. As regards the assessors, all that is asked of them is that they should be Soviet voters; and a characteristic feature of the class character of Soviet justice is that 50 per cent of the assessors must be workers, 35 per cent peasants, and 15 per cent soldiers. The lack of legal experts among the judges and magistrates is made good by the existence of strictly organised and strongly centralised public prosecutors, who thus exercise a decisive influence upon the proceedings. Counsel for the prosecution are appointed and dismissed by the people's commissary for justice, who is also the supreme public prosecutor of the republic. Local Soviet authorities have merely an advisory function. The predominant influence of the public prosecutor is intensified by the non-existence of a corps of independent barristers.

### 5. SOVIET LAWYERS

There are no independent, free defending counsel in Russia. Their place is taken by the "Collegium of Defenders" whose members are appointed by the soviets after nomination by the provincial law-courts. Supplementary members can be appointed by the presidium of the Collegium, in which communists hold a decisive majority. The executive committees of the soviets are entitled to reject candidates, and at any time they can dismiss individual lawyers from the Collegium. Since, however, as we have seen, the Soviet courts are not in our sense of the word "law-courts", but bodies which exist to fulfil political aims, the mechanism for the defence of accused persons is valueless. Its retention can only be due to the bolsheviks' desire to maintain a show of the outward forms of normal judicial procedure. For practical purposes the defending

counsel in a Soviet law-court cuts a pitiful figure. Especially in political trials (and almost all trials in Soviet Russia have a political flavour) the counsel for the defence produce the impression of being persons who do their work under stress of unceasing terror, so that an abyss yawns between them and the imperturbable barristers who defend accused persons in a western law-court. Even so, the poor vestiges of free advocacy which remain in contemporary Russia are a thorn in the side of the bolshevik leaders. Krylenko has more than once denounced these unhappy defenders in very rough terms, and has repeatedly endeavoured to have them swept altogether out of the way. "What does such defence really signify? Who is defended? Is it the proletarian State-system or some particular accused individual? Socialist society is defended by the law-courts and by the public prosecutor, so why should there be any other defenders?" During the Shachty trial the Soviet press was vociferous in its indignation because the defending counsel were bold enough to do their best on behalf of the accused. "It looks as if they considered their function to be the whitewashing of these abominable miscreants, instead of joining forces with the court for the protection of the Soviet regime!" To say nothing of considerations of elementary humanity, which demand that the interests of accused persons should be protected in every possible way, bolshevik fanatics fail to grasp the elementary fact that whereas it is the business of the public prosecutor to bring into the limelight all the evidence which tells against the accused, and whereas it is the business of the law-courts to sift all the data in search of the residuum of truth—it is the business of the defending counsel to stress all the points which tell in favour of the accused, and that this is a necessary part of reasonable and fair legal procedure. To how low a level the bar has of late fallen in Soviet Russia was disclosed in February 1930 when the Collegium of Defenders in Kiev decided that in future no legal assistance could be given to "kulaks" (well-to-do peasants) and "nepmen" (private traders).

## 6. CRIMINAL PROCEDURE

The criminal procedure of the Soviet State, like its legal code, deprives the accused of a number of safeguards which elsewhere in the twentieth century are taken as a matter of course. There can be no appeal against a sentence, although a sentence can be quashed if formal errors have been committed during the first hearings. A typical bolshevik discovery in the legal domain is that persons who are called Public Accusers are allowed to play a part in criminal procedure. Public Accusers are representatives of trade unions and other public organisations. The only use of this innovation is that, whenever the authorities think fit, the trial can be transformed into a drama, into a political demonstration. A similar effect is gained by the appointment of Public Defenders, this being done when a theatrical whitewashing of the accused is thought desirable.

The preliminary inquiry plays an extremely important part in Russian criminal procedure. In this matter what outrages a western student of Soviet life is not the provisions of the code (which resemble those of other countries) but the way in which these provisions are carried into effect. There are very few domains of Soviet administrative work in which codified rights are so unscrupulously twisted as they are in the inquiries that precede a criminal prosecution. Let me give a few instances. According to §134 of the criminal code, an accused person must be brought before the court within twenty-four hours of his arrest. In actual practice, however, persons are kept in prison for many days or weeks after arrest without being brought up for trial and without the silence by which they are surrounded being broken. The object is to produce mental depression, and to arouse a state of mind in which the "offender" will be ready to make the desired avowal of guilt. For the same reason, and in part also because the law-courts are overburdened with work, the provision that a preliminary inquiry shall not last more than two months is frequently evaded. The mishandling of prisoners during a preliminary inquiry (a

matter to which I shall return) is of far more moment in Russia than in other lands for the reason that in Soviet Russia much more weight than elsewhere is laid upon the results of the preliminary inquiry. "In the legal procedure of the Soviet Union", we read in a bolshevik newspaper article, "there is no difference of principle between the preliminary inquiry and the actual trial. The results of both are of equal value to the judge. Both are under the supervision of the public prosecutor. . . . The public prosecutors conduct both the preliminary inquiry and the trial; the examining magistrates and other examining officers work under their direction, so that the public prosecuting department really conducts the whole preliminary inquiry. As soon as the preliminary inquiry is finished and the trial begins, the importance of the public prosecutors becomes even greater. They are entitled to veto the closing of a preliminary inquiry, to refer back a closed preliminary inquiry to the examining magistrate for further investigation, to advise the court to suspend a criminal prosecution, to make changes in the indictment or in the list of persons who are being brought before the court, and, finally, to order the postponement of a trial." No words of mine could make clearer than does this bolshevik formulation the power exercised by the Red public prosecutors in Soviet criminal procedure.

Very recently there have been some reforms in Russian criminal procedure which indicate a tendency to provide certain legal safeguards for accused persons. For instance, in a decree issued by the Commissariat for Justice on December 7, 1928, the permissible duration of a preliminary inquiry was reduced from two months to one, it was provided that domiciliary visits should in general no longer be made at night, and so on—but of course the effect of these formal mitigations will depend upon the good will of the executive instruments of justice. An ostensibly unimportant omission from the new text of the criminal code shows that in this field likewise the general trend of bolshevism towards radicalisation has been

at work. Hitherto the article concerned ran as follows: "The court will form its decision exclusively on the grounds of fact recorded in the documents and proved during the sitting of the court." In the new formulation the paragraph runs: "The court will form its decision exclusively from the facts recorded in the documents." The deletion of the clause, "which have been proved during the sitting of the court" signifies neither more nor less than that a Soviet law-court can condemn an accused person upon the ground of accusations which have never been made known either to the prisoner or to the public. This enormously intensifies the importance of the secret preliminary inquiry. I recall a scene in the Shachty trial that emphasises the danger of the innovation, which had not then come into force. Public Prosecutor Krylenko, if I remember aright, brought forward during the last days of the trial certain details ascertained during the preliminary examination which were entirely new to all concerned. When the defence inquired upon what the public prosecutor grounded his contention, Krylenko answered with a smile that the foundations were in the preliminary inquiry and were recorded in the documents relating to the trial. The defence protested against this action of the public prosecutor, and, seeing that there were foreign observers present, the court had grudgingly to sustain the objection, telling the public prosecutor that he could not make use of materials which had not been openly discussed. But according to the recently reformed code Krylenko and the judges would have had a free hand in this matter.

## 7. THE TRIAL OF THE GERMAN STUDENTS

After my exposition of the theory and the legal foundations of Soviet justice, I propose to describe certain famous recent trials during which I was present in court, and which display the practical workings of this strange legal system. I shall begin with the trial of the German students. In 1924, three

young men, ill-provided with money and experience, but full of enterprise and dominated by illusions, set forth into Russia, designing to get into touch with Russian scientific investigators and to make researches in Siberia. Their names were Kindermann, Wolscht, and von Dittmar, the first named, twenty-one years of age, having already taken his doctor's degree. In the train from Riga to Moscow they made the acquaintance of Hilger, secretary to the German legation in the Russian capital, and he, on taking leave of them, invited them to visit him. At the legation next day Hilger, in conversation with other members of the legation staff, expressed the opinion that the simple-minded young fellows were not unlikely to get into serious trouble in Soviet Russia—a foreboding which was speedily fulfilled.

Kindermann, the intellectual leader of the three, though not really a communist by conviction, had joined the Communist Party of Germany in the belief that the Red Card would open doors to him in Moscow. This indiscretion landed him and his comrades in gaol. The Russian Young Communists with whom the German students fraternised at the communist lodging-house where they went to stay in Moscow soon discovered that the bolshevik convictions of the travellers were by no means watertight. The answer they received to inquiries addressed to communist headquarters in Berlin confirmed their suspicions, whereupon the young Germans were arrested. When they were searched, in Wolscht's waistcoat-pocket there was found an empty tube which had contained aspirin tablets, and on chemical analysis of the interior of this tube traces of cyanide of potassium were discovered. That was enough to convince the OGPU that it had laid hands upon a gang of dangerous conspirators. Worse still, one of them had had a magazine pistol taken away from him during the customs examination at the frontier, and, in the light of what happened later, this seemed a formidable incident. Further inquiries made in Berlin, the failure to discover anything of importance during a preliminary inquiry which lasted for weeks, and the

unmistakable simplicity of the accused, ought to have convinced the authorities that the three were, as they professed themselves to be, perfectly innocent travellers. The Ogpu, however, could not accept this view. The inquiry, indeed, became dormant for a while, but the young men were kept under arrest.

Not until January 1925, when they had been on remand for nearly four months, did the Ogpu grow active once more. This was because in Leipzig a man named Skoblevsky, one of the most noteworthy agents of the Ogpu, had been tried and sentenced to death for having instigated a German communist to an act of political assassination. In these circumstances the three German students became useful—as hostages. The Russian political police began to “work upon” the accused. I shall describe the method in considerable detail because, with minor differences, it was a reproduction of that with which stories of the victims of the Cheka have made the western world familiar. A beginning was made by giving much better treatment. The prisoners, who had up till now been very badly fed and had been kept in extremely dirty and bug-infested cells, were given excellent food and roomy quarters. Since, however, “kind” treatment did not lead to a confession (there was nothing to confess) the opposite method was tried. There was quartered, first with Wolscht, and then with Kindermann, a person who said that his name was Baumann, and he professed to have been accused of similar offences as the three. During the subsequent trial Kindermann declared that this Baumann, alias Wertz, had inspired confidence to begin with, but had subsequently, at first by homosexual advances and then by hypnosis, tried to induce him to an “avowal”.

Von Dittmar, a German from the Baltic States, had in the interim been “effectively dealt with” by the Ogpu. Precisely in what way, we do not know, for Dittmar disappeared after the trial. What we have to remember is that he did not belong to the German Reich, and therefore could expect no help from Germany. He was probably won over, like so many

victims of the Ogpu, by the promise of indulgent treatment when the case came to an end. As a rule such persons, when they have done what is wanted of them, are shot behind closed doors. Dittmar's confession was so amazing, so absurd, that it could hardly have been conceived anywhere else than in the brain of a Chekist. He declared that he and the two others had come to Russia with a commission from the political section of the social democratic police presidium of Berlin and from Captain Ehrhardt, a prominent German fascist, in order to commit terrorist outrages on Trotsky, Stalin, and other noted Soviet citizens. To me, who watched the young fellows in court for days, and have had excellent reports of them from their university teachers, the utter absurdity of this "avowal" is manifest on the face of it. That the whole charge was "made in Russia" is further disclosed by the contention that the social democratic Berlin police could have joined hands in a conspiracy with the German fascists!

How Kindermann was induced to confess remains obscure, and yet not altogether so, for the Shachty trial of the year 1928 showed that the dreadful pressure of the bolshevik methods of preliminary inquiry was able to extort obviously false confessions from other foreigners. During the trial, Kindermann declared that his avowal had been made after he had been hypnotised several nights in succession. With the third of the accused, Wolscht, the Ogpu could make no headway. The authorities, however, armed with the "avowals" of Dittmar and Kindermann, began the trial on June 24, 1925. It lasted for ten days, during each of which the court sat for ten hours.

Whereas the Shachty trial, as I shall show presently, was designed to influence the Russian public alone, the trial of the German students was staged for foreign political aims. In the Supreme Court of the Soviet Union there were present, over and above the members of the diplomatic corps and foreign and Russian journalists, none but Party members. The foreign observer, if he ignored the red hangings on



the wall whose legend proclaimed the court to be an "organ of the power of the proletariat and the village poor" (i.e. proclaimed it to be an instrument of class rule), and if he could disregard the sporting rig of Krylenko the public prosecutor, might at the outset have imagined himself to be watching a normal legal procedure, "normal" in the European sense. The presiding judge was Yaroslavsky-Hubelmann, chairman of the Central Control Commission, a cool-headed bolshevik extremist, who throughout the trial was careful to maintain the forms. His assessors were a Red Army officer of no account, and (also in uniform) Ulrich, an extremely uncongenial and cynical man who made his appearance in subsequent trials as chairman of the military section of the Supreme Court. For well-informed persons, special interest was aroused by the interpreter, Herr Max Lewin, sometime president of the Soviet republic of Bavaria (of unhappy memory), now a minor employee of the Comintern, wearing frayed trousers. But I must not forget the Comrade Commandant. Strangely enough in every Soviet law-court there is a military commandant, who is responsible for keeping order, and who gives the word of command "Stand up!" when the judges enter.

The chief person of the drama, however, was the public prosecutor Krylenko, the Fouquier-Tinville of the Russian revolution. He is a fanatic of the fanatics; one who never allows sentiment to interfere with his devotion to the cause; always in fighting trim; and, according to circumstances, ruthless, cynical, fatherly, caressive, or fierce. It is remarkable that neither the German students, nor, subsequently, the Germans who were among the accused in the Shachty trial, seemed to have had even an inkling of how strenuous and inexorable a personality confronted them in Krylenko. Neither Kindermann nor Wolscht was able to cope with him for a moment. If (as was the case) every impartial observer speedily became convinced that the three German students were not guilty of the offences with which they had been charged and to which two of them had confessed, this was not because of the strength

of their defence—which was often lamentably weak—but because the young men's good faith was plain upon the face of the matter and the charge was so manifestly absurd.

What Krylenko and the Soviet government wanted was, not merely to secure a death sentence which would enable them to exchange their three "hostages" for Skoblevsky, but also to throw as much mud as possible at the German social democrats and at capitalist Germany. It was because of these fixed motives that the trial degenerated into a farce. Krylenko continued to insist that the accused must have been commissioned by the police presidium of Berlin; and nothing could get out of the judges' heads the ridiculous idea that the German corps for supplementary war service, to which Wolscht had belonged, had been a strike-breaking organisation! These Soviet judges exhibited—or feigned—profound ignorance of the most elementary happenings in the outer, the non-bolshevik world. Altogether apart from this, Kindermann and Wolscht, with their consequential airs, their cyanide of potassium, their magazine pistol, their spurs, and their fraudulently obtained insignia of the Communist Party of Germany, made it easy for the judges and the public prosecutor to represent a pair of feather-brained and enthusiastic youths as German fascist conspirators of the deepest dye. All the other Germans who were present in court were again and again mightily annoyed with the folly of the two callow youngsters. It must be recorded to their credit that, after spending nine months in the grip of the OGPU, they were still ready to seize the chance which open trial gave them, and were eager to get their indignation off their chests. Nevertheless we German onlookers had a sense of patriotic relief when, towards the end of the trial, more creditable representatives of the students of Berlin and of the German youth in general appeared in the persons of Fink and Rose, who were summoned from the homeland as witnesses. Only through vigorous diplomatic pressure was it possible to ensure the calling of these two witnesses. Krylenko showed his annoyance at their

arrival on the scene by demanding their arrest on the ground that they had been confederates! The court, likewise, when announcing the grounds for its decision, tried to invalidate Fink's and Rose's testimony on the pretext that they, too, must have been concerned in the plot. But the cynicism with which Krylenko grasped at any available means for the attainment of his ends was made especially conspicuous by the abuse he showered upon Hilger, secretary to the German legation. For seven years this German diplomatist had been doing his utmost to improve the relation between Germany and Soviet Russia, but the public prosecutor made his chance meeting with the accused in the railway train a pretext for thinly veiled insinuations that he must have been somehow involved in the so-called conspiracy. The court did nothing to suppress these disquisitions, and the German envoy had to take drastic measures to put an end to the scandal. Nothing, in fact, but Count Brockdorff-Rantzau's threat to leave Moscow forthwith prevented the arrest of Fink and Rose. With an ill grace, the Soviet authorities had to content themselves with the theatrical gesture of expelling the two inconvenient witnesses from Russia.

The evidence of Baumann-Wertz and Rosenfeld was sensational. Baumann-Wertz as stool-pigeon and Rosenfeld as examining magistrate had been responsible during the preliminary inquiry for eliciting Kindermann's disastrous avowal. The former was brought into court as a prisoner under remand. A tall, strongly-built man, dark of visage and made unrecognisable by a pair of blue goggles, he appeared in the witness-box flanked by Chekists with fixed bayonets. When questioned as to his previous history, he declared that as a German fascist he had taken part in the struggle on the Ruhr, had committed many outrages on the French, and had assassinated a German named von Wicking; thereafter he had been sent to Russia to perpetrate terrorist outrages upon Soviet leaders. Krylenko amplified this fable (the falseness of which was obvious in the witness's gestures and voice) by explaining that Baumann

was to be tried very soon.<sup>1</sup> Throughout the trial of the German students, Krylenko continued to speak of the witness as "Chief Provocative Agent Baumann", and thanks to this alleged position Yaroslavsky, the presiding judge, allowed the spy to refuse to answer certain "opprobrious" questions put by Kindermann. Rosenfeld, the examining magistrate, who during the preliminary inquiry had managed to insinuate himself into Kindermann's confidence, did not cut a much better figure in the witness-box than "Baumann". Needless to say that both Rosenfeld and Baumann confirmed the assertion of the indictment relating to Kindermann's avowal, but came off so badly under the inquisitorial questioning of the youthful German doctor (who elaborately, not to say pedantically, exposed the methods of the preliminary inquiry) that Krylenko had to intervene again and again in the attempt to save the face of the OGPU.

However interesting the details of this trial, and however informative regarding the nature of bolshevik justice, they played no part in deciding the issue, for the sentence had been determined long before the case came into open court. The only persons in doubt as to their fate were the accused themselves, who knew little or nothing of Russia, and had been kept in the dark as concerned the Cheka trial in Leipzig. Krylenko demanded "the extreme measure of social self-protection", namely death by shooting. The court complied with his demand by passing three death sentences.

Thereupon the Soviet press gave the German government a broad hint by reminding it of the death sentence on Skoblevsky passed in Leipzig. But the German authorities and the German public at large, confident that Moscow would never dare to carry out the sentence on Kindermann and Wolscht, were content to ignore the bolsheviks' invitation for an exchange of prisoners. They pointed out, moreover, that to execute

<sup>1</sup> At the time I assured some of my German friends that this trial would never take place. More than six years have elapsed since then, and not a word more has ever been heard of Baumann-Wertz.

Kindermann and Wolscht would be nothing short of judicial murder, whereas in Leipzig the court had passed a perfectly fair sentence upon an avowed assassin and his confederate. This line of argument made the Soviet pressmen foam at the mouth, thus showing the high value they put upon Skoblevsky. Months passed during which affairs remained in statu quo. At length, in December 1925, in southern Russia and the Caucasus the Ogpu arrested thirty consular agents and their wives on a charge of espionage. Some of the accused had, perhaps, been a trifle indiscreet, but they had certainly never been guilty of the offence laid to their account. The others, and above all Theophil Eck of Baku (elderly and ailing), were absolutely innocent, but this mattered nothing to the Ogpu or the Comintern, which wanted to get their Skoblevsky back again. Since a few other German citizens were under duress in the Soviet gaols for alleged political offences, in the end the Soviet government offered eleven persons in exchange for Skoblevsky. After tedious negotiations, terms were arranged upon this basis, and at last, in the summer of 1926, the two German students and the nine other victims of the Ogpu were able to leave Russia, while Leipzig sent Skoblevsky back to the land of his birth. Thus Moscow got its own way, but at the heavy price of making the western world fully acquainted with the nature of its judicial procedure. Even before this, the revelations of Russian refugees had thrown a glaring light upon the characteristics of the bolshevik State police, but the trial of the German students dotted the i's and crossed the t's before the international world. The Party leaders must know by this time how disastrous an effect the Kindermann affair has had on the prestige of the Soviet State, and I doubt if they would a second time pay so high a price for a Skoblevsky.

### 8. A BRITISH INTERLUDE

Nothing but the fact that they were German citizens saved the lives of Kindermann and Wolscht. A year and a half later,

in the same court, I attended another great political trial, but this time the victims were Russians. In May 1927, the Conservative government of Great Britain had aroused consternation in the Kremlin by breaking off diplomatic relations with the Soviet Union. The rupture had gravely intensified Russia's economic embarrassment, and, besides this, the Stalinist regime was in the throes of a fierce struggle with the Trotskyist opposition. Fears were entertained lest the breach with England might be followed by a breach with other States which would imitate England's example, and the authorities thought it expedient to disseminate the notion that a general anti-Soviet war was imminent. Athirst for vengeance, the Ogpu made haste to arrest all Soviet citizens who had had any sort of dealings with persons of British nationality, ranging from the leaders of Soviet economic enterprise down to the kitchenmaids and chauffeurs at the British legation. Shortly after the rupture of diplomatic relations with Great Britain, the Soviet envoy Voikoff was assassinated in Warsaw by Koverda, a youthful Russian refugee. By this senseless outrage, the wrath of the Ogpu was fanned to a white heat. On June 9th, it retorted by shooting twenty Russian noblemen and dignitaries of the old regime, persons a good many of whom were only arrested immediately before the execution, and exclusively for this purpose—for, as the Ogpu frankly declared, not one of those thus massacred had any sort of connexion with the Russo-British dispute or with Voikoff's murder. The act was one of mass terror, naked and unashamed.

The foregoing facts are related as preliminary to the account of the trial I attended in October 1927. The accused were two brothers named Prove, young Soviet citizens of German origin, and their brother-in-law, a Russian barrister named Korepanoff. The indictment was framed against two other persons as well, but I need not name them, for they were mere accessories. The aim of the Prove trial was to demonstrate that members of the sometime British legation had been carrying on espionage on a large scale, for the authorities

hoped in this way to work off some of their rancour against the departed Englishmen and to discredit British diplomacy before the world at large. The case was fairly simple. Mr. Charnock, economic attaché to the legation, had (like his chief, the envoy Sir Robert Hodgson) lived and worked in Russia before the war as a civil engineer. He had had extensive relationships with the Russian bourgeoisie, and had also been acquainted with Prove, then a wealthy man. In 1921, Charnock returned to Moscow, this time as a British diplomatist, and revived his old acquaintanceships. "This was incautious of Mr. Charnock", declared the accused Korepanoff during the trial; "and I feel myself to blame for having associated with this foreigner". Still, the elder Prove, his father-in-law, had told him that there was a treaty between Russia and Britain in accordance with which the Ogpu would not in future prosecute Soviet citizens for holding converse with persons attached to the British legation. The court and the public prosecutor were highly amused at the supposition that any such treaty had existed, and with good reason, for the Ogpu would certainly not have tolerated intercourse of the kind unless it was likely to derive advantage therefrom—this meaning that the Russians associating with members of the British legation would give the Ogpu regular reports concerning what they could glean from their foreign acquaintances. Anyhow, the friendship with Charnock compromised the Prove family; all the more in that the three accused persons were employed in the Russian war office. During the trial the Prove brothers admitted having received money from Charnock for military information. The brother-in-law, too, an elderly man fighting for his life, avowed everything which the judges and the public prosecutor wanted him to avow, except that he refused to admit having been a spy, acknowledging only that it had been "criminal" of him to enter into relationships with the British at all. Whenever this matter came up, Ulrich, the presiding judge, who had already shown his seamy side in the Kindermann trial, would look askance at the foreigners

in court, but went so far, on one occasion, as to say that, after all, holding converse with Englishmen was not, *per se*, a crime.

I am still inclined to believe that the two Proves and Korepanoff were not free from guilt, that the death sentence passed by Ulrich and subsequently carried out conformed to the letter of the Soviet laws. Still, the usual practice in Red Russia is to treat spies "administratively", this meaning to put them out of the way privily; and what gives the Prove trial its peculiar character is that these minor henchmen of the British (to whom no very grave offences were attributed in the indictment) should have been dealt with in open court. The object was to stage a political demonstration for the benefit of the foreign world, a demonstration against the conservative government of Great Britain which had broken off diplomatic relations with Moscow. "Justice" for a political end, just as in the case of the mass murder of the twenty Russians!

#### 9. THE SHACHTY DRAMA

Whereas the trial of the students was, in effect, a threat to slaughter hostages, and the Prove trial was instituted to subserve the ends of bolshevik foreign policy, the Shachty trial was a great demonstration staged to produce an effect in domestic political life. During the winter of 1927-1928, the economic crisis had become seriously aggravated. For the first time since the inauguration of the Red regime, the peasantry had adopted large-scale measures of passive resistance to exploitation by the new State, refusing any longer to supply grain at the prices fixed by the government—prices far lower than those which prevailed in the open market. At the same time there were disquieting symptoms in the field of manufacturing industry. Despite the incentive of numberless catchwords, the output of the individual operative was steadily diminishing, there was an increasing lack of discipline among the workers, and the proportion of unusably defective goods in the produce of the factories was increasing. Especially in the



coalmining industry were matters going from bad to worse, for here output diminished from week to week. In other countries when such circumstances arise various expedients are tried. In Soviet Russia, the authorities look round for scapegoats and whipping-boys.

On March 10, 1928, with great pomp and circumstance, the Soviet press published a manifesto by Krassikoff, public prosecutor at the Supreme Court, to the effect that in the Donets minefield there had been discovered a counter-revolutionary conspiracy for the disorganisation and destruction of the coalmining industry. The conspirators had hoped to achieve their sinister ends by means of incendiary fires, explosions, rattening, flooding of the pits, and also by economic measures, such as deliberate bad management, waste of capital, reduction of the quality of production, increasing the cost of output, the working of unproductive mines, etc. The counter-revolutionary organisation was said to consist of sometime capitalist owners and shareholders in the mines, aided by a group of mining engineers and other technicians, foremen, and members of the clerical staff, who had been in receipt of salaries for their nefarious activities, paid partly by the former mineowners and partly by foreign spies. The working miners were said to have been persistently humbugged by the conspirators, and incited to strike. A careful investigation had shown, it was declared, beyond possibility of dispute, that the organisation extended its tentacles into high economic circles in Moscow, but that its animating centre had been in foreign parts. The expropriated Russian capitalists and conspirators now living as refugees in the West had been in close touch with the agents of certain German industrial firms and with the Polish secret service. The alleged criminals living on Russian soil had all been arrested.

The evening before this sensational announcement (which to all initiates read like a Nick Carter novel), Chicherin, minister for foreign affairs, had invited the German envoy to an urgent interview and, having given him a brief account

of the circumstances, had informed him that unfortunately among the arrested persons were a few German engineers and fitters as to whose guilt there could be no shadow of doubt. I should like to say, in passing, that I believe the arrest of these Germans to have been the outcome of an excess of zeal on the part of the Ogpu, and that the involvement of German firms in the affair had been no more than a heedless act on the part of the bolsheviks, who believed that it would give the plot a semblance of greater reality if its centre could be located in Berlin. Subsequently, however, the itch for infallibility made the Soviet authorities stand by their blunder, even when its repercussion in Germany had proved so amazingly violent.

The German subjects among the arrested persons were two engineers and two fitters from the A.E.G. (General Electrical Society of Berlin) and a fitter who had been attached to the Knapp factory in Wanne-Eickel, where coal-cutting machines are made. They had all of them been for many years in the employment of the above-mentioned firms, and were skilled workers with an excellent record. The A.E.G. and Knapp's were absolutely convinced from the outset that the charges brought against them must be absurd, and promptly published declarations to that effect, with the result that German public opinion (recently enlightened by the trial of the three students) became greatly exercised about the matter—excitement being increased by a speech made by Rykoff, chairman of the people's commissaries, underlining the accusation which Public Prosecutor Krassikoff had made against the German firms. In actual fact there were no specific charges against the arrested persons, and it was impossible to make any effective reply for the nonce to the vague mouthings of the public prosecutor. Since there were good reasons for being afraid that the affair might drag on as Kindermann's trial had done, the German government thought it expedient to speed up matters by breaking off some important economic negotiations then proceeding between Germany and Russia. The result of this

was that the trial began in May, only two months after the last of the arrests.

As in the Kindermann case, so now, the Supreme Court refused to allow a German barrister to appear for the German accused, so that the lawyer who came to Moscow could only (as when the German students had been tried) appear in court as an ordinary spectator. Still, I think that the maintenance of European forms of justice in both these trials was to some extent assisted by the presence of a German barrister and by the representatives of the foreign press. Certainly Count Brockdorff-Rantzau, German diplomatic representative in Moscow at the time (since deceased), said soon after the trial that in his opinion the acquittal of the Germans was largely due to the frank reports published by the foreign correspondents. There can be no doubt, however, that the main credit for the solving of all the grave disputes between Germany and Russia during recent years must be assigned to Count Brockdorff-Rantzau himself. It was he who, in virtue of his declared russophil policy, was always emphatic in his protests against bolshevik excesses. Nonetheless, since his position made it impossible for him to undertake any public defence of his policy, down to the close of his life many Germans stigmatised him as "pro-bolshevik", though any one who was even slightly acquainted with the Holstein count must have been well assured that such a suspicion was thoroughly unjustified.

The Shachty trial was the greatest stage piece performed in my presence during my four years' residence in Russia, outdoing in its dramatic interest even the military and proletarian parades held twice every year in the Red Square. Besides this, it was most instructive in its disclosures concerning the characteristics of the Soviet Russian psyche. Since upon this occasion the trial was staged for the benefit of a Russian rather than a foreign audience, it was no longer held in the small law-court in Spiridonovka Street, but in the largest room in Moscow, the pillared hall of the sometime Nobles' Palace, now known as the "House of the Trade Unions". It would

have been still more effectively and appropriately housed in the Opera house, but no doubt the Ministry of Education would have vetoed this for financial reasons. The Moscow press was turgid with enthusiasm concerning the drama about to take place. The indictment occupied 240 pages of print; 136 places had been assigned to pressmen; there were boxes for the diplomatic corps; cards of admission were issued day by day to 150 "workers", this meaning that in the thirty days of the trial there must have been 45,000 proletarian spectators and auditors; the accused numbered 53; 74 working miners had been called as witnesses; there were two dozen lawyers, seven judges, two first-grade public prosecutors, five "public accusers" and two military commandants; high-power lamps were used; films were taken daily, and wireless carried what was going on in court to audiences numbered by the hundred thousand; the Commissariat for Justice announced that it was preparing a book to be entitled *The Trial of the Shachty Conspirators*, which would contain a full report, and would be published the day after the passing of the sentence. More than this could hardly be expected even in the Land of the Soviets. A few sops, too, were thrown to the foreign world. Instead of having Comrade Ulrich, the usual chief of the Supreme Court, as presiding judge, the authorities on this occasion selected Vyshinsky, professor of jurisprudence at Moscow University and at that time likewise rector of the institution. Furthermore the best advocates in the capital were called into the field as defending counsel, and were allowed a freedom of speech which exasperated the bolshevik press. As usual, however, in momentous trials, Comrade Krylenko acted as public prosecutor.

On May 17th it was still generally believed that the trial would not open until the 21st, for the defending counsel, in view of the amount of dirty linen that was to be washed in public, said that their briefs would not be ready before the latter date. To the bolshevik Supreme Court, however, the preparatory work of the defenders was manifestly of trifling

importance, and the upshot was that we all assembled at ten in the morning of May 18th in the columned hall of the Nobles' Palace to await developments. The scene in the courthouse was impressive beyond expectation. To the left of the platform, seated in closely packed rows, were the fifty-three accused, surrounded on three sides by a fence of Ogpu soldiers with gleaming fixed bayonets. The fourth side of the square, the one towards the audience, was occupied by the two tables of the defending counsel. In the centre of the platform, at a still higher level, upon a super-platform draped in red, sat the seven judges, conspicuous in the middle of them being the auburn locks of Vyshinsky--a man still quite young, red-checked, and healthy-looking. On either side of him sat a member of the Party, each wearing spectacles, while the remaining four judges were obviously of working-class origin, and represented the proletariat. Then, on the right of the stage, came the little table at which were the two commandants, linking the table of the public prosecutors with the judges' bench. On the extreme right, close to the audience, sat Krylenko, chief public prosecutor and deputy minister for justice, somewhat stouter than he had been in 1925. His nearest neighbour was the second public prosecutor, Roginsky, fat, black-haired, a sort of handsome edition of Zinovieff. Behind Krylenko's gun-emplacement was the group of public accusers: bearded professors, newspaper editors, and trade-union officials, brought into court that they might give expression to the popular indignation.

Had it not been for the wireless microphones on every table (with the notable exception of that of the defending counsel) and for the incessant flashing of the high-power lamps of the cinema operators, one would hardly have been inclined to regard this as a revolutionary tribunal, so quietly and comfortably did the affair proceed. The judges, the defending counsel, and the public prosecutors were all at liberty to smoke as much as they pleased. There was none of the stiff solemnity of the Kindermann trial in this improvised legal

theatre; the cheap externals of a revolutionary demonstration had been renounced in favour of an atmosphere of quiet matter of fact. At first everything went as if by rote; the citing of the accused, Krylenko's enumeration of witnesses for the prosecution. After a time, however, the situation grew more ominous. The defending counsel, in their turn, put in an extensive summary of rebutting evidence. At this Krylenko feigned amusement, then looked rather bored, and went on to make copious pencil notes on an enormous writing-block. Those acquainted with him could realise that the barometer was at "stormy"; but the accused, men from the mining district, careworn after spending months in the clutches of the OGPU, did not know this. Now came the first coup, which instantly revealed the character of the trial. The court decided that almost all the witnesses named by the public prosecutor should be called, but that almost all the witnesses named for the defence and the documentary evidence the defending counsel desired to put in should be disallowed. Among the rejected witnesses were a number of the employees and directors of the A.E.G. of Berlin, the very persons specified in the indictment as confederates. Another of the disallowed witnesses was Seebold, a civil engineer working for the Knapp firm, who was said to have been the instigator of the crime of Badstieber (one of the accused), and who was in Russia at the time of the trial. Let me anticipate by saying that throughout the first week of the trial we German correspondents drew attention again and again to the court's obvious dread of having this "criminal" Seebold put into the witness-box; that Seebold ultimately came to Moscow on his own initiative and placed himself at the disposal of the court; and that he was neither arrested nor examined as a witness, notwithstanding the fact that in the end the court condemned Badstieber who was alleged to have been led astray by this same Seebold. The Shachty trial, and therewith Soviet justice as a whole, was hopelessly compromised by the action of the authorities in the matter of Seebold.

Besides Badstieber, there were two other German subjects among the accused, Otto, a certificated engineer, and Meyer, a fitter. Two more Germans had been arrested, but were discharged before the trial.

During the first four days of the proceedings, things happened which must have given a shock even to the most callous Muscovites. For instance, the main work of the "defending counsel" seemed to be, not so much defence, as an attempt to wring from the accused a half avowal or a quarter avowal of their innocence! We wondered, often enough, whether we were in a lunatic asylum or a comedy theatre when we listened to such a dialogue as the following between a defending counsel and his protégé.

Barrister: "Is it not possible, Berezovsky, that you stopped work in that gallery because to work it was no longer a paying proposition?"

Berezovsky: "No, I stopped the work there because I wanted to damage the pit."

Barrister: "May not the pumps have been too few to prevent the mine from being flooded?"

Berezovsky: "Certainly there were rather few pumps, but I deliberately allowed the pit to become flooded."

For hours the defending counsel tried to extort from those of the accused who were willing to "admit their guilt" testimony bearing upon the general economic defects of the mines—a matter to which the barristers did not themselves openly allude, since this would have exposed the core of the whole "conspiracy". In conversation with German engineers who were well acquainted with the "sabotage" area in the Donets mining basin, I subsequently obtained precise information as to the actual conditions prevailing in the region—information which showed beyond dispute that the avowals of the accused (about two-thirds of whom admitted their "guilt") were brazen falsehoods—or, rather, had been forced from them by the OGPU. This was especially plain in the case of Badstieber, whose mendacious avowals could have been refuted word by

word by the dreaded Seebold. That, of course, was why Seebold was neither arrested nor put into the witness-box. But, altogether apart from false avowals in respect of matters of fact, where else in the world could one have seen self-acknowledged criminals under preliminary examination putting their signatures to such formulas as, "I, being greatly to blame, did this, that, or the other"; or "My abominable crime consisted of this. . . ."! How could a plain German workman like Badstieber, a man with no economic training whatever, have spontaneously thought of declaring that by doing this or that he had "injured the Russian proletariat to the tune of about 400,000 roubles"; or of saying, "thereby I involved the Soviet State in further losses of at least 10,000 roubles". No experienced psychologist will deny that such avowals could not possibly have been natural and spontaneous.

Nor was it enough that these unhappy accused persons, who by the dread of imminent death and with their morale broken by the threats of the Ogpu, should insist on their guilt despite the efforts of their defenders. The shamelessness of the prosecution went even further. One day the presiding judge read aloud a long memorial from some of the accused in which they begged the court to protect them against their defenders Muravioff and Deneke, who had told them that they were certain to be executed if they persisted in their avowals! No Russian barrister would ever dare to advise an accused person to recant his confession if that confession were true. If the defending counsel urged recantation, this can only have been because they knew that the confessions were false, and that it was the way of the Ogpu to jettison such unhappy tools when their use was at an end. The Supreme Court, however, promptly appointed new defending counsel for the stubborn penitents, and instructed the public prosecutor to institute an "inquiry into the behaviour of the two defenders Muravioff and Deneke". It was characteristic of the staging of this topsy-turvy "trial" that those among the accused who acknowledged their guilt (upon whose avowals the whole



case turned) when proceeding hour after hour with their self-accusations, were able quietly to adjust the microphones, and to make sure that they would be heard by the wireless public, even while they were facing the lights and the persistent shooting of the cinema operators.

There were fleeting moments when the veil was torn from the scaffolding of lies which the OGPU and Krylenko had erected around the Shachty affair. I still shudder when I recall one incident in the trial. Skorutta, an engineer fifty-one years of age, had stubbornly protested his innocence during the preliminary inquiry and had continued to do so in open court. Now, under examination, he said hesitatingly: "But last night I signed a written avowal of my guilt." Thereupon a woman's voice rang through the hall, a despairing cry: "Nikolai, what have you done? It is false; you are innocent!" A thrill ran through the vast assembly. In the box assigned to the relatives of the victims, Skorutta's wife was seen to fall in a faint. Skorutta himself tottered, and sank into a chair which Krylenko, with much presence of mind, pushed towards him. A number of women among the audience uttered loud cries, and several of them likewise fainted. Amid the general excitement, Vyshinsky adjourned the sitting. When the proceedings were resumed, Skorutta had so far recovered that, in tremulous tones, he was able to say: "When the November revolution occurred, I returned to Russia, and devoted all my energies to promoting Soviet reconstruction. The experiences of the last few months, however, have utterly crushed me. Nothing but the medicines I have been given have saved me from going mad. I really do not know what I signed last night. I was in a condition in which I would have signed anything." Vigorously attacked by Krylenko, to whom this incident was mightily inconvenient, Skorutta held firm during a prolonged cross-examination; but then, after the court had been adjourned for another two hours, he gave way, and reiterated his admission of guilt! I do not think a soul in court was not fully aware that this second avowal could only have been due to further influences

brought to bear on the unhappy man when he was behind the scenes. There is other evidence besides that of the Skorutta affair to show that the Ogpu was steadily at work on the accused even during the trial, and during the night hours. Two of the accused, certainly, had like experiences to those of Skorutta, namely Boyarinoff and the engineer Bashkin, whose unmasking was to be the work of one of the German accused, the A.E.G. fitter named Meyer, a man of fifty-two years of age.

It was, indeed, the part played by Meyer in the trial which throws the strongest light upon the chasm which yawns between Soviet Russia and the outer world. Here was a German workman, ordinary enough, but a man of considerable intelligence, sent by his firm to Russia to help in the installing of turbines. Meyer had been delighted to accept the commission, for two reasons: first of all because he had for several decades been a left-wing socialist, and would now have an opportunity of acquiring first-hand knowledge of the interesting country in which the proletariat had risen to power; secondly, as he told me frankly enough after the trial, because he was to be very liberally paid. Being a simple and straightforward man, he had failed to grasp, as Otto, the A.E.G. engineer had grasped, the political significance of the trial. We Germans in court felt sure of this, and were convinced that even throughout the lengthy preliminary inquiry he had formed no clear notion as to the subtle and dangerous methods employed by the Ogpu. He had, doubtless, been outraged by his own treatment—at the way in which, after being liberally supplied with cigars and wine, there had been a change of policy, and threats of bodily violence had been given a turn. But when he appeared in court it was with all the frankness and simplicity of a man who knew himself to be innocent and to whom it seemed a matter of course that those who had put him on trial would speedily realise this, since their business was to discover the truth.

His examination by the public prosecutor lasted for several hours. Meyer's answers were exhaustive and matter of fact.

The witness did his utmost to throw light upon all the technical points upon which the charge against him turned. Krylenko, however, continued to insist that Meyer had told Bashkin, one of the witnesses for the prosecution, how turbines could be put out of action, and had urged Bashkin to act on the information. In this matter the public prosecutor showed so overwhelming an ignorance of technical details while attempting to support his absurd accusation, that Meyer in the end refused to answer any more questions, merely waving his hand as if to say: "I do wish you would stop talking about things concerning which you know absolutely nothing!" Thereupon Krylenko produced Meyer's "avowal" in the preliminary examination. In this case, likewise, the accused explained that the examining magistrate had browbeaten him to such an extent that in the end he had been ready to sign whatever was laid before him. In fact, while in prison on remand, Meyer had had a heart attack which had confined him to bed for a time.

But Meyer did more than his Russian comrades in misfortune had been able to do. He succeeded in giving convincing proof of the absurdity of the admissions that had been extorted from him. For instance, in the second document to which he had put his signature, he had accused Hogge, a Russian, of anti-Soviet offences. Now, in open court, Meyer exclaimed: "How could I possibly have brought so absurd a charge against a man who never did anything wrong?" Thereupon Krylenko put into the witness-box, to confront the German workman, the Russian engineer Bashkin, upon whose confession the whole charge against Meyer depended. Bashkin, trembling like an aspen leaf, repeated word for word his former accusation. Meyer had talked over with him various ways (technical details given) in which turbines could be injured or wrecked. When this testimony was translated into German for Meyer's benefit, he stared at Bashkin like one who is listening to the raving of a lunatic. Then, wrathfully and most convincingly, he described how Bashkin had been an indefatigable

worker, watching over the turbines by day and by night, and taking every precaution mentioned to him by Meyer to ensure their safe working. Of course there had been talk of the things that might injure turbines; they were referred to in the detailed printed instructions handed to every turbine worker!

While Meyer was giving this impressive evidence, Bashkin began to sob, and then burst into a storm of unrestrained weeping when Meyer, in moving tones, concluded as follows: "How is it possible that a man whose aim is to destroy should show so much care in his daily work as Bashkin did? Why should so good a fellow, who was always on the most cordial terms with me and did everything he could to help me, now ascribe to me the commission of incredible crimes which would land me in prison for years if I had really committed them? I can only suppose that he was put up to do it!"

Bashkin found not a word to say in answer to this, and at length more dead than alive, an image of unspeakable distress, dropped into his seat. Every one in court was profoundly impressed by the scene, and even Krylenko, the arch cynic, could find nothing better to do than to ask Meyer the foolish question: "Who can you suppose to have induced Bashkin to make false avowals?" Meyer's rejoinder was merely to shrug his shoulders contemptuously. As for myself, I was overwhelmed with the longing that all the German workers might have been witnesses of the scene in which one of themselves, unconsciously and without intending it, was giving so pitiless an exposure of the realities of what boasted itself to be the first proletarian State in the world.

In the Shachty drama, the bolshevik State did something more than expose the abominations of its secret-police system, for, in addition, it brought its own economic methods into grave disrepute. Before March 10, 1928, the day of the Krassikoff proclamation, there had throughout Soviet Russia been perpetual talk of "our splendid mining system, which, in its bold and enthusiastic development, has outstripped the

production of pre-war days". The papers were perpetually writing about the valiant Reds who occupied positions as managers, engineers, and so on, in all the leading posts of this great industry. If, in connexion with mining problems, other names were mentioned from time to time, they were those of such mining experts as Professors Skochinsky, Tertiboreff, Andreeff, etc. Of the men who were doing most of the practical work in Russian mining, nobody uttered a word. Well-informed persons knew, indeed, that there were engineers, technicians, mechanics, etc., employed in and about the pits, but they belonged to the non-Party and nameless crowd of "spetsy"—non-communist experts of whom nothing need be said. March 10th, however, brought about one of those transformation scenes which have been so frequent in the history of Soviet Russia. Betwixt night and morning the picture of Russian mining industry was turned upside down. Now, as with one voice, the Red journals began to write about chief engineers, pit-head men, foremen, mining inspectors, the chairmen of technical soviets, committees of engineers—the Donets mining basin seemed to have been suddenly peopled by numberless non-Party elements upon whose shoulders all responsibility had rested. It never seemed to enter the minds of any of these bolshevik scribes that in Soviet Russia behind every "spets", behind every "White", there stood on guard a Red. All the leading Reds of the Don basin, such as Lomoff, Kizileff, Gontsharenko, and Shandler, who had not been wont to hide their light under a bushel, were conspicuously silent, or at most would now and again emit a muted utterance regarding the nefariousness of the "spetsy" with whom they had been working shoulder to shoulder for years. Yet every German business representative or engineer who had ever worked in the Don basin or elsewhere in Soviet industry, was well aware that these Red directors and trust captains were not as a rule inclined to take back seats while the "Whites", that is to say non-Party engineers, they were supervising, pranced in the limelight.

There could hardly be more convincing proof of the artificiality of the whole Shachty affair than the fact that not one of the Reds of the Don mining basin sat among the accused; nay more, that all attempts of the defending counsel to call these Reds as witnesses were overruled, with one exception. The exception, the manager of the mining department of the "Donugol", Comrade Kizileff, showed clearly enough why men of his kidney would have been out of place on the stage of the Shachty theatre; for this communist from the provinces boldly insisted that he himself had not played a responsible part in the mining district at all, having been engaged on important affairs abroad, so that everything had been left to his assistant Chinokal, one of the accused. This contention was utterly absurd, for many of those present in court knew perfectly well what important work Kizileff had done in the "Donugol". Even for the general public the absurdity was plain enough to deprive Krylenko and the court of any desire for more testimony of the kind.

I am not wishing to imply that the Red directors had been guilty of the offences of which the accused in the Shachty affair were supposed to have been guilty; but, in view of the way industry is regulated in the bolshevik State, they certainly could not have been less guilty than were the accused. For if any of the accused were really guilty, their supervisors among the communists must surely have had ample opportunity of noting the fact. For ten whole years, according to Krylenko, these criminals had been at work—ten years spent under the close observation of the Red directors and the omnipresent Ogpu! This contention alone was sufficient to enable every thinking man to form a sound opinion of the Shachty trial.

But what no one would have dreamed of before the trial was this: that the preposterous charges should have been sustained by the "avowals" of some of the accused; that the witnesses would be able to provide nothing in support of the indictment; that not even the beginnings of an attempt would be made to discredit the allegations of the defence. Again

and again during those unhappy June days in 1928 did I think of the Dreyfus affair which brought France very near to revolution and for a decade caused excitement throughout the civilised world. Then the question at issue was that of the unjust condemnation of but one man. How degenerate, then, must be the civilised world of to-day when it accepts with so much equanimity the thousandfold greater judicial crimes of the bolsheviks! Had it not been for the fact that three Germans were implicated in the sordid affair, the western world would have taken very little notice of the tragedy. The close of the trial was in keeping with its preliminaries and its course. Krylenko continued to insist that there had been a widespread conspiracy, contending that all the charges had been "proved up to the hilt". He arranged for an acquittal in one case only, that of Meyer. This German proletarian was allowed to escape for political reasons, a small concession being thus made to placate Germany. For Badstieber, who had done him such excellent service, the public prosecutor demanded a nominal punishment. Otto, the engineer, was to have a six to twelve months' term of imprisonment, "to teach him how he ought to behave in a foreign land". The Russian victims were to atone more terribly for their offences. Two and twenty times in Krylenko's concluding speech came the demand for execution by shooting. Once more the grand inquisitor of bolshevism displayed the calibre of Soviet justice by using such terms as the following in support of his demands for the death penalty in the case of some of the accused: "The misdemeanour has been brought home to the criminal. He is not, indeed, extremely dangerous, but have we any need for such persons in Soviet Russia? No. Then let him be shot!" At midnight on July 6th (the court remaining theatrical down to the close of its sanguinary proceedings) the announcement of the sentences began. In an indifferent and subdued tone, Vyshinsky recited the sentences. Eleven of the accused were condemned to death; four of them were acquitted, among these being Meyer and Otto; the remainder were condemned to various terms of

imprisonment, followed in some instances by a period of police supervision. The choice of those who were put to death was guided by reasons no less inscrutable than had been the cynicism of the prosecution. In the end, by what seemed an arbitrary determination, the death sentences were confirmed in the case of five of the offenders. The "chief criminals", who had confessed, were reprieved, but on the afternoon of July 10, 1929, four of the subordinates in the alleged conspiracy, Boyarinoff, Yussevich, Budny, and Kryshanovsky, were shot; and also Gorletsky.

#### 10. GORLETSKY

It was by the execution of Gorletsky that we foreigners were most profoundly moved. Our curiosity had been aroused concerning this engineer in chief, for the reason that the indictment had been so emphatic about his guilt. In court he showed himself to be a man well on in years and characterised by an Olympian repose. Manifestly he was one who had already settled his account with the world. Subsequently I made the acquaintance of some Germans who had met him when he had visited the Westphalian mining district, and they told me they had found him extraordinarily congenial. He was, they said, almost pedantically straightforward, absolutely incorruptible, well-mannered, expert in his profession, conscientious, and extremely loyal to his bolshevik employers. As a mining engineer he had acquired a considerable reputation even before the war. To the Soviet government such men were worth their weight in gold. Down to the time of his arrest, Gorletsky had enjoyed an authoritative position in Russia, and had been highly respected by all the Party members concerned with mining affairs. But from the time when the Shachty drama opened, Gorletsky was stigmatised as the chief organiser of the "work of destruction" which he was supposed to have carried on as a hireling of foreigners. He defended himself convincingly, though without much spirit. It was easy for him



as a technical expert, to expose the stupidity of the charges of sabotage. But Kazarinoff and others of the accused had "confessed" that Gorletsky had been a traitor and an instigator. When confronted with him in court, these victims of the tender mercies of the Ogpu reiterated their charges. Gorletsky wearily contemplated the demoralised creatures, and quietly though unemphatically repudiated their accusations. Talking the matter over with bolsheviks who were present in court, I subsequently stressed the atrociousness of the death sentence passed on Gorletsky, and they agreed with me that as far as matters proved in court were concerned nothing noteworthy was left to account for his condemnation. "The fact is", they said, "that his offences were such as it was not expedient to make public." Offences, one may suppose, resembling those "confessed" by Gavruchenko, one of the intended witnesses for the prosecution, who, during the preliminary investigation, long before the trial opened, "had committed suicide" on the day of his alleged avowal.

In common with some of my friends, I believe that the real reason for Gorletsky's execution was very different. He was the only one of the fifty Russian accused who ventured in open court to acknowledge that he was not a convinced supporter of the Soviet form of government. All the others, even those who made no avowal of guilt, declared that, whereas originally they had been anarchists or democrats or social democrats, "the amazing successes of the bolshevik regime" had, as the years passed, opened their eyes to the true light, so that their most ardent wish was, to the end of their days, to remain loyal to the Workers' and Peasants' State. Well, one must not pass too harsh a judgment upon this hypocrisy on the part of the helpless victims of the Ogpu.

When subjected to a political cross-examination by Krylenko, Gorletsky's answers were such as might have been expected from a man animated by European sentiments.

Gorletsky: "All the communists who have been engaged in mining enterprise must testify to the fact that I devoted

my best energies and my best abilities to the service of the new State. Politics never interested me, and I did not cudgel my brains about them. Still, if you ask me, as a matter of theory, which form of government I regard as the best, I will tell you. I prefer a democratic republic."

This sacrilegious answer caused a sensation in court. Krylenko hissed at the old man like a viper:

"Perhaps a democratic republic à la Hindenburg, Gospodin Gorletsky?"

Gorletsky (shrugging his shoulders): "I did not say that."

We all of us felt assured that his theoretical advocacy of a democratic republic would prove fatal to Gorletsky. Such was, indeed, the upshot.

## II. THE JUDICIAL MURDERS OF 1930

The Shachty trial became a byword in Russia and also abroad. In this same year 1928 it was followed up by legal proceedings of the same sort, but less conspicuous because they occurred in the provinces. Then, in 1929, at Kharkov, a spectacular trial was inaugurated against professors and others who had been implicated in the Ukrainian separatist conspiracy, but here there were no death sentences, for the reason that Party members were involved. The following year, in November and December 1930, there was a large-scale second edition of the "Shachty" trial in the prosecution of Professor Ramsin and others at Moscow. This judicial tragedy was the same story almost word for word. Once more Krylenko framed an indictment based upon the confessions of the accused and emphasising the participation of foreign general staffs. Once more, for weeks in succession, able men of previously unchallenged reputation stood in front of microphones relating with a wealth of detail how they and their confederates had planned and carried into effect, both at home and abroad, things which could account for the disastrous condition of Soviet life. Once more the indictment laid stress on the confessions of persons who had

been shot, and once more the "indignant proletariat" demonstrated on the large scale in favour of shooting the criminals. Worse than this, the Moscow collegium of defenders actually issued a memorial to the same effect! The stage management on this occasion was even more imposing. The masses were mobilised to march past the court-house; the proceedings in court were transmitted everywhere by wireless; and the whole lengthy trial was filmed.

One thing, indeed, Krylenko had learned from the Shachty trial. His list of the accused contained only persons of whose condemnation he could make sure. Of the eighty who had been arrested, no more than eight were brought into court. Obviously the public prosecutor did not wish to run the danger that some of the accused might break down before the assembled populace, as Skorutta and Bashkin had done in the Shachty trial, seeking safety in the truth instead of in the maintenance of extorted avowals. Moreover, not one of the death sentences passed in the Ramsin trial was carried into effect.

In October 1930 this Ramsin trial had been preceded by a similar but more tragic affair. There appeared one day in the Soviet press the lengthy confessions of forty-eight professors and industrial and economic officials of the Soviet government, disclosing how, for years, they had been attempting, by the subtlest methods, to sabotage and ruin the food supply of the Soviet Union. Among the signatories of these confessions were names which had been in the best possible odour, such as those of Professor Ryazantseff, Professor Fedotyeff, etc. Simultaneously it was announced that the guilt of those concerned had been established by the OGPU in a secret inquiry, that all of them had been condemned to death, and had already been shot.

The aim of the massacre of the forty-eight and the purpose of the Ramsin comedy were plain enough to any who read between the lines of the confessions and of the indictments. All the alleged facts of sabotage were closely related to the most urgent needs of the Russian public at the time. In other

words, "Since bolshevik economic policy is, by and large, necessarily infallible, the extant poverty and distress can only be explained as the outcome of a sabotage of this policy. Well, we have seized the saboteurs and have shot them." Of course I can understand very well that persons lacking first-hand knowledge of Soviet Russia, persons who were not present in court during the Shachty trial, will find it difficult to believe that such abominations can be committed for reasons of State.

## CHAPTER SIXTEEN

### THE POLICE STATE

#### I. THE CHEKA (NOW THE OGPU)

I have allotted so much space to the political trials because they give a more trustworthy picture of legal conditions in Soviet Russia than do the numberless tales of the Cheka with which Europe has been regaled for the last decade. Convinced though I am that, in the main, these tales give an accurate picture of the doings of the notorious secret police and of secret "justice", as regards details the stories need critical examination. How intense a dread the Cheka-Ogpu has inspired in the Russian populace may be measured by the fact that the safety of every Russian who is arrested is to be brought into question, even though the court is of such a character as was discussed in the preceding chapter. For, however much more tragical the "legal" procedure corresponds to law as understood in the West, it nevertheless provides the accused and his friends with the satisfaction of a public trial. Thanks to this public trial, the accused, unless his morale has been completely broken down during the secret preliminary inquiry, is given a chance of making a mute or vocal appeal to the enviroing world, a chance of exerting a moral influence upon the higher authorities in the State and the Party, a chance of suing for pardon. Here is, at least, a vestige of hope. But if the Ogpu keeps its victims persistently behind closed doors, if it refrains from having them brought to trial, there is no possibility for either the arrested persons or for their friends and relatives to take effective action of any kind. The examination remains secret, the accusation is secret, the proceedings are secret (for often the accused knows nothing of what goes on), and even the sentence is often secret.

The Cheka-Ogpu is a disastrous legacy to the bolsheviks

from tsarism. The tsarist Ohrana had the same sort of powers as the Cheka, and worked on similar lines. This fact should prevent Europeans from taking, as they are apt to do, a rosy view of the conditions that prevailed in Old Russia. Police terror, a network of espionage, a ferreting into the opinions of private persons, and secret jurisdiction are characteristic both of barbarism and of weakness in governments. The bolsheviks have subtilised the Ohrana system, have improved its technique, without humanising it. Moreover, they have generalised it, have made its tentacles more all-embracing. In Old Russia, the Ohrana notwithstanding, there were a thousand ways in which people could get into touch with those who shared their political views, and could even carry on activities directed against the ruling system. The members of the bolshevik Old Guard are living witnesses to the fact that the Ohrana was far less ruthless than is their own Cheka. Was not Stalin himself seven times in the clutches of the Ohrana, was he not six times deported, and did he not escape ever and again, without being subjected to the extreme penalty? The Cheka-Ogpu, on the other hand, has never yet voluntarily allowed a genuine revolutionist (now become a counter-revolutionist) to slip through its fingers! In contemporary Russia, an open avowal of belief in democracy will suffice to bring a man down to the grave. Think of Gorletsky!

## 2. MASS TERROR

In the foregoing chapter, when describing the great political trials of recent years, my aim was, not so much to draw attention to the physical violence of the Red State, as to give the reader an idea of how Russia as a whole is impested by the atmosphere of a prison-house. The worst, the most infamous feature of the Ogpu is not that it secretly executes its victims after having crushed them in mind and in body. I have no wish to lay stress on the fact that such men as Dittmar and Baumann, persons acquitted in the Shachty and Ramsin trials

after having "confessed", will perhaps never reap the reward of their rascality or pusillanimity, will perhaps never again see the light of day. It is not my main concern that these poor wretches have been doubly cheated. What I wish to insist upon as the worst feature of the case is the tyranny exercised over this new nation, so that in the twentieth century above every one of the 160 millions of Russians, Tartars, Mongolians, Caucasians, etc., living within the Red barbed-wire fence, there hangs ever the Damoclean sword of this medieval Ogpu. What I want to insist upon is this, that no Russian, however clean his conscience, can live for a single hour without the omnipresent thought, "Perhaps they will seize me to-day; perhaps to-morrow I shall vanish from the world's ken never to be seen again, not for any offence I have committed, but simply for 'reasons of State' as conceived by the dozen oligarchs who live in the Kremlin". Again and again must the civilised world be reminded that there exists a great power, Soviet Russia, which keeps its citizens in perpetual duress by unscrupulously using their relatives as hostages; nay, worse, that it incessantly plays off the life of the father against the son, that of the mother against the daughter, that of the husband against the wife. When it makes arrests, it prefers to do so by night, secretly, in some out-of-the-way corner; it never gives any intimation of an arrest to the friends or relatives of the victims; it keeps people in its gaols without examining them; having arrested them, it sometimes shoots them without giving them the shadow of an idea why they have been seized. Such things can happen to any one in Russia, and the whole nation is unceasingly aware of the fact. The system is one of mass terror, and whatever has been given that name in other parts of the world is a trifle in comparison. Dreyfus, Beilis, Ferrer, Yakubovsky—what small matters are all these "affairs" which have so greatly exercised the minds of Europe in the past, when compared with the titanic tragedy which has been going on in Russia for the last thirteen years. No condemnation can be too strong for the European and above all for the German

intellectuals who have made it a practice to voice protests on behalf of political offenders (communists for the most part) in European gaols, without ever saying a word of blame, without ever being moved by a shade of indignation because of the doings of the bolshevik State (I except the League of the Rights of Man, which has several times protested against bolshevik terrorism). Far be it from me to pretend that legal conditions in Germany or other capitalist countries—in Poland or Italy, for instance—are above criticism. Yet how insignificant is all which even the harshest critic of western justice can say as compared with what ought to be said about the systematic travesty of justice in Soviet Russia! The hypocrisy of bolshevik propaganda as directed against the alleged police terror of Europe and America can be made plain by the following figures. In Prussia during the seven years from 1920 to 1926 inclusive, 44 death sentences were carried into effect. In Soviet Russia during the eight weeks from October 24 to December 19, 1929, there were 144 executions—counting only those which, during the period in question, were officially announced in the Soviet newspapers. Moreover, whereas those executed in Prussia were ordinary murderers, the Russian executions were all of persons styled political criminals.

### 3. THE STATE AND CRIME

The paragraphs previously quoted from the code make it plain enough that Soviet justice is concerned, not with the prevention or punishment of ordinary crime, but with the protection of the interests of the Red State. Whereas political offences, even of a trifling nature, can be visited with the punishment of death (the paragraphs relating to these matters are most elastic), the extreme penalty inflicted for ordinary murder is ten years' imprisonment. Under primitive conditions of civilisation, human life counts for very little. In Russia, the war, the civil war, and the Cheka have combined to reduce its value to a yet lower level. Characteristic is the fact that the



Soviet press gives very little space to the accounts of murders and of trials for murder which have no political significance. Still less interest is displayed in thefts from private persons. My rooms in Moscow were broken into four times in the course of nine months, the articles of value removed by the burglars amounting in gross to a value of several thousand marks. Only after appeal to the higher authorities was I able to induce the police to take cognisance of what had happened, and I had to pay thirty roubles for the services of a police hound. On one occasion, within twenty-four hours of the burglary, I myself handed over the receiver (perhaps he was the actual thief) to the police. I came across him in the so-called "Criminal Market", the Ustynsky-Rynok, where he was trying to sell a pair of my boots. Certainly he was arrested; his house was searched; I got my boots back—but I never heard of any legal proceedings being taken against him. One of my acquaintances had his family jewels stolen. A little while afterwards he found one of the trinkets in a big jeweller's shop, where the OGPU was in the habit of exposing seized valuables for sale. My friend had photographs which proved that the article had really been his property, but he was advised to let matters lie if he wished to avoid disagreeables. Being a Soviet citizen, he followed this kindly counsel. In 1930, there was a burglary at the Finnish legation, and the plate was stolen. The envoy, being now in need of table silver, went to the before-mentioned Cheka shop (there is no other jeweller's shop left in Moscow) to buy what he wanted, and was offered, at a suitable price, his own plate, stamped with his monogram! Being a foreign diplomatist, he was able to get it back for nothing on proving that it belonged to him. A woman I knew lost one of her children, and reported the matter to the police. "What business is that of ours?" The distracted mother implored them to institute a search, to communicate with the other police stations, and so on. "That would give us a great deal of trouble. In Moscow dozens of children run away every day. Why so much fuss about a child? If it had been a strayed cow. . . ." There is

scarcely a foreigner with whom I became acquainted during my four years' stay in Soviet Russia who had not been robbed once at least. I can only suppose, therefore, that the criminal population is a large one. If the State were to take the matter up seriously, what could it do with so many offenders? All the available prisons and all the villages of northern Siberia are packed with "politicals".

#### 4. PENAL SYSTEM

In pre-war Russia, the Russian revolutionists were busied in anti-tsarist propaganda all over the world, making a great to-do about the terrible punishment of deportation (administrative exile). To-day, when they have risen to power, these same revolutionists are utterly ruthless in the use of deportation. Otherwise how could the concentration camps, such as the one on Solovetsky Island in the White Sea, be full to overflowing? One of the instruments, certainly, of the tsarist penal system has been abandoned—the *katorga*, the Siberian penitentiary, so vividly described by Dostoevsky in his *Recollections of a Dead-House*. The actual infliction of punishment is unquestionably milder than it used to be under the tsars. Even though the average bolshevik prison is far from being so agreeable a place of residence as might be imagined by those simple-minded foreigners who have been privileged to inspect one or two model institutions. Soviet penitentiaries are more humanely conducted than were those of Old Russia, and indeed than many foreign prisons. The bolsheviks are doing a good deal of experimental work in this field, and our prison reformers would do well to pay some attention to the matter. No doubt one of the great advantages of many of the Soviet prisons is the fact that there is so little watching and warding of the prisoners, but this would be impracticable in non-bolshevik States, being only practicable in Russia because there "freedom" offers so few advantages. I have myself visited Soviet prisons in which doors were not barred, and

in which there were no warders. The inmates worked unguarded in the neighbourhood, fetched freight from the railway station, went home from time to time on furlough, and so on. In some such "houses of restraint" there were big factory buildings, with a club-house, a theatre, and a sports ground. Not one of the prisoners had any thought of trying to escape, for the simple reason that he was not in the western sense of the term a prisoner, but only a paid and well-fed worker, whereas his "free" comrades in the outer world had to endure all the economic hardships prevailing in the Soviet State.

A characteristic of these model institutions is that they only keep offenders who can adapt themselves to this particular environment, unsuitables being quickly moved on to less "desirable" prisons. In Russia, moreover, the problem of prison labour and of paying for it is nowadays far less complicated than it is in western lands where over-production prevails, seeing that in Russia there is a general shortage of commodities as well as of skilled labour.

In the prisons, which are known as "isolators"—the name and the idea of "penitentiary" having been abolished—there is compulsory labour. But, in addition, there is for certain offenders a special punishment or "hard labour" which is certainly more severe than the "compulsory labour" or "penal servitude" of the West. "Hard labour" means that the offender has been sent to do a specified amount of work in one of the State enterprises or in his own workshop without receiving any remuneration. This corresponds, in a sense, to the "impositions" which schoolboys have to do. Penal servitude, as ordinarily understood, prevails widely in the Soviet State. The best known example of this is the work done in the forest camps of northern Russia, whither of late years, hundreds of thousands of "kulaks" (well-to-do peasants) have been deported. The conditions prevailing in the lumber camps are terrible. Paid a derisory wage, living in the most abominable and unsanitary surroundings, very inadequately fed, these unhappy beings, who have not been guilty of any offence worthy of the name, toil in the desolate primeval forests of

northern Russia and northern Siberia in order to provide the Soviet State with cheap timber to be dumped in foreign lands. By tens of thousands they have perished in the concentration camps. The first information regarding this abominable form of slavery came to the western world from German peasant settlers whose friends or relatives had been deported far north. Since then, further details as to the frightful conditions that obtain were gleaned from escapees. I have in my possession letters from lumbermen who work in this sort of thralldom, or letters from their friends and relatives, breathing an almost inconceivable unhappiness.

In the prisons for persons on remand and undergoing preliminary examination the conditions are likewise extremely unsatisfactory, in large measure because these places are so overcrowded. At Butyrka, the central prison in Moscow, the inmates are at times so closely packed that there is actually insufficient floor space for them all to lie down, and some of them have to pass the night standing up. Moreover, there have been so many stories of floggings in these prisons for persons under remand, stories told by eye-witnesses, that we can hardly doubt their truth. Germans living near a police-station have repeatedly declared that they suffered extreme distress from hearing the cries uttered in the night by prisoners being thus mishandled. Obviously, then, there is a set-off to the commendation of the treatment of those detained in the model prisons of Soviet Russia. Such places are exceptional.

##### 5. CIVIL LEGAL PROCEDURE

Very little that is good can be said of civil legal procedure in Soviet Russia. Although the civil code is far more comprehensive and far more precise than the criminal code, in actual working the former is very little better than the latter, for the reason that in civil cases the social origin of the contending parties exerts a predominant influence. When there is a dispute between a private employer and one of his workmen, the employer nearly always gets the worst of it; and in other

lawsuits far more attention is paid to the social relationship of the persons concerned towards the new State than to abstract legal considerations. The civil courts make no attempt to conceal the fact that they deal out a different measure of "justice" to workers and to bourgeois, and political arguments often play a considerable part in the specified grounds for a decision. For this reason, persons who are not of "worker or peasant origin" rarely bring a case into court when the other parties to the possible suit belong to what in Russia forms the new ruling class. On the other hand, the civil courts are often overburdened with preposterous lawsuits between persons or organisations of the same social status; for instance between State or cooperative enterprises, or between such enterprises and their employees. Those who think themselves aggrieved run to the *cadi* even though there is scarcely the remotest likelihood of their winning their case, for the lawsuit costs them nothing, or it is paid out of the deep pockets of the bureaucracy. Here is an instance. One of the servants in the tenement house where I lived in Moscow wanted to become a member of the tenement cooperative. Since she had lived there more than three years she had a legal right to be accepted as a member. All the same she was refused, simply because the executive committee of the cooperative did not want to accept her. She threatened legal proceedings without effect. "Let her go to court if she likes. That does not cut any ice with us." The young woman brought her suit, and, as a proletarian, was granted the right of becoming a member of the cooperative, but the executive committee (a semi-official authority) was not reprimanded in any way, and will probably seize the first opportunity of bringing a counter-suit of some sort. All the same, the reader must not draw the conclusion that the inmates of this tenement are a particularly bad lot. Such vexations are habitual in the Soviet bureaucracy, which has the evil qualities of every bureaucracy—inertia, stupidity, arrogance—in conjunction with a general lack of interest which the Russians proudly speak of as their "broadmindedness".

## CHAPTER SEVENTEEN

### SHORT COMMONS FOR THE DISFRANCHISED

#### I. PARIAHS

TOWARDS the close of 1928, when, owing to the increased economic distress, the authorities began to wage the class war with renewed energy, the policy of putting the disfranchised on short commons was pursued more vigorously than ever. Whereas previously the Workers' and Peasants' Inspection had been content to devote its attention to particular enterprises or particular individuals, there was now extended to the non-Party population at large the system of "general purification" or "general purgation" which had hitherto been applied within the Party alone. With a loud beating of the journalistic drums, the authorities began to clear the "corrupt and alien elements" out of the Soviet apparatus and the cooperative and social organisations. The electoral campaign at the beginning of the year was made a prelude to the purgation of the enterprises at large. The Party issued plain instructions to effect a considerable reduction in the numbers of the soviet electors. In the elections of the year 1927, only 3·7 per cent of the population had had no votes, this meaning that no more than 3·7 per cent of Russian citizens of an age to vote had been accounted enemies of the Soviet State. But that accorded ill with the allegation that the "class enemies of the proletariat" were becoming more and more active, and were showing themselves to be an increasing menace to the Soviet State. Such a slogan had to be sounded to divert the attention of the urban masses from the true causes of the crisis which became marked during the last quarter of the year 1928. Scapegoats had to be found. Party instructions were zealously obeyed by the electoral committees. To consider Moscow alone, whereas in 1927 the disfranchised numbered

only 20,000, by March 1, 1929, the number had risen to 80,000.

I had opportunities of watching the procedure of the electoral committees. For example, a servant in the tenement house where I lived was disfranchised because her husband, who had at that time been unemployed for more than a year, had earned a pittance by selling gherkins, bread, and cigarettes at a street crossing—this signifying, in Soviet terminology, that, as a private trader, he was a “non-worker”. For a year, the family of five (the children were ailing) had been living exclusively upon the wage of 35 roubles per month I paid the woman. To the notice-board on the wall of the house was pinned a list of the thirteen members of our little community who had been disfranchised. Following each name was the reason for disfranchisement: “as private trader”; “as son of a pope”; “as daughter of a privy councillor”; “as sometime gendarme”. The electoral committee, fired with the utmost “revolutionary zeal” (read, servility to those in high places), did not shrink from adducing the most preposterous reasons for disfranchisement, since the list of the disfranchised was to be made as long as possible. For instance, unemployed women who had hawked soap in front of the public baths and wash-houses, thereby earning some forty to fifty copecks per diem, were deprived of the right to vote. Under stress of the disapproval aroused in the factories by such preposterous incidents, the Soviet press pilloried amazing instances. Goldberg, chief of the Russian savings-bank system, who had been a member of the Party since 1913, was disfranchised because his grandfather had long ago been a rag-and-bone man. Professor Abrikozoff, one of the most famous of Russian physicians, a man who had attended Lenin, shared the same fate. Brodsky, an engineer who was a member of the Supreme Economic Council, was disfranchised because before the war he had held office in a joint-stock company of which the recently deceased Krassin, the Soviet diplomatist, had at the same date been one of the directors. Working men were deprived of the

right to vote because during the civil war, when all ordinary occupations had come to a standstill, they had for a space made a livelihood as small traders. In the provincial districts, astounding examples of bureaucratic harshness were to be noted during this period of "electoral reform". In one Siberian village the schoolmistress was deprived of the right to vote because "she was walking-out with a man who was suspected of having been one of Kolchak's officers". Another case of disfranchisement was even more preposterous. "Nikolai Stepanovich Shedrintseff, a poor peasant, a cunning fellow, takes no part in public life, is always in good spirits, political trend not ascertainable, inclined to keep up the old customs, untrustworthy on the whole." Many of the worst excesses of the "purifiers" were rectified on appeal. Of the 80,000 disfranchised in Moscow, about one-fourth had their right to vote restored. But the preponderant majority of the victims could get no redress.

On this occasion the results of disfranchisement were exceptionally grave to the persons concerned. The "voteless" were refused the card which would have enabled them to buy the necessities of life in the public shops, and were therefore compelled to get what they needed in the open market at much higher prices (more than double). They were also expelled from the trade unions, which meant that they were no longer able to secure jobs in State and cooperative enterprises. They likewise forfeited the right to unemployment allowances. Not content with this, the authorities soon began to evict the disfranchised from their domiciles. The subsidiary purpose of the whole campaign to "purify" the electoral register was, by involving the disfranchised in political and social discredit, to reduce as far as possible the number of mouths for which the proletarian State had to provide food, to "mitigate" the housing shortage, and to lighten the burden upon the public treasury.



## 2. PURGING THE SOVIET APPARATUS

A general purging or purification of the Soviet apparatus followed this unprecedented "electoral campaign". Throughout the years of its existence, the Soviet government had been harsh towards superfluous, undesirable, or disliked workers and officials to a degree unparalleled in the behaviour of any modern bourgeois State. Up till now, economic need had, for the most part, been the driving force. Now, however, the aim was to get rid of the remnants of the old bourgeoisie, of persons who for a decade had worked more or less zealously as clerks in the Soviet public offices and factories, but who were at length to be deprived of their livelihood in order that their posts might be vacated in favour of whole-hog supporters of the Party, who were beginning to grumble at the spread of unemployment. Of course there was no difficulty in finding a plausible pretext for the purification. The authorities declared that the carrying out of the Five-Year Plan demanded exceptional efficiency and industry on the part of all who were concerned in it, and that consequently the "decaying" and "bureaucratically corrupted" elements must be combed out of the apparatus.

The decree commanding this purification was not issued until June 2, 1929, after the work of purgation had in fact been going on for many months. As early as November 1928, the Soviet press had reported the first successes in this kind, and I will record a few items taken haphazard from its columns. On November 30, 1928, in the "Moskovskaya Gazeta" it was announced from Smolensk that, as a result of the purification of the Soviet apparatus, 1,423 employees had been discharged, among them being sometime noblemen, landowners, high officials, the offspring of priests, merchants, and rich peasants. On January 21, 1929, in the "Vechernyaya Moskva", appeared fragments of a speech by Yaroslavsky, containing drastic observations about the purification: "We have ploughed up the Centropsirt [the Central State Spirit Trust], ridding

ourselves of 260 absolutely alien elements, among them 48 White officers, a senatorial public prosecutor, a tsarist examining magistrate, etc." On November 23, 1928, "Izvestia" wrote: "Purification of the State apparatus in northern Caucasia. Of 5,800 employees whose bona fides was scrutinised, 13 per cent have been rejected as alien, anti-Soviet elements." From "Pravda" of January 9, 1929: "In Odessa there has begun a purification of the personnel of the university students, among whom anti-Soviet elements had craftily insinuated themselves. In one of the universities there were found great numbers of the offspring of popes, rich peasants, and merchants, who had entered under the mask of workers and peasants. They were all expelled."

In "Izvestia" under date February 10, 1929, there were many columns describing the work of purgation. I extract the following data: "During the examination and purification of the Soviet apparatus in White Russia, 225 persons were expelled from the village organisations. In the province of Smolensk, 15 per cent of the staff have been expelled from the agricultural organisations as 'sometimers' [sometime members of the bourgeoisie]; from the Timber Trust, 19 per cent.; from the State stud farms, 19 per cent; and from the Land Survey Office, 14 per cent. . . . In Tver as a result of the sifting process, among 5,846 State employees, 673 were discharged: in Novochoerkask (southern Russia), 179 out of 780; in northern Ossetia (a mountain region in the Caucasus), 98 out of 840." Now comes a sentence which gives a plain indication of the motives underlying such activities: "In Novorossisk (southern Ukraine), 98 employees were discharged, among them being 18 sometime landowners, 31 sometime factory owners and house owners, 2 priests, 7 persons who had been guilty of speculation and similar offences, 21 sometime traders, 8 bureaucrats and slackers, 4 sometime policemen, 2 deportees." Very significant is the way in which the leading Soviet newspaper here lumps with common criminals the unfortunates who used to follow occupations now despised. On February 26, 1929,

the "Rabochaya Gazeta" announced the discharge of 18,000 bureaucrats and "sometimers", as a result of the work of purification effected by 27 provincial Workers' and Peasants' Inspections.

Thus the Soviet ordinance of June 2, 1929, limped in the rear of accomplished facts. It seems, indeed, only to have been issued in order to render somewhat less drastic the future work of purgation, a work which had been going on as the outcome of Party orders. No one but an innocent can regard this "posthumous" decree as sufficient proof that the work of purification had been "reluctantly undertaken as the outcome of overwhelming necessities of State"—although Dr. Otto Pohl, former Austrian envoy in Moscow, has declared as much. The foregoing extracts from the press suffice to show that in the work of "purification" no heed whatever was paid to the principles enunciated in the decree, to the effect that conditions of economic and technical efficiency were to be predominant in deciding who were to be discharged and who were to be retained in their positions. The daily work of the inquisitors was guided by very different considerations. What did a fanatical communist care about the economic efficiency of an employee when the latter could be classed as a "sometimer" or as an "alien element"? The real attitude of the Party was disclosed by the "Rabochaya Gazeta" in its issue of January 27, 1929: "Some of the comrades seem absolutely unable to understand that a sometime official of tsarist days, even though he has worked under the Soviet government as long as ten years, has no prescriptive right as against the hundreds of thousands of unemployed, among whom there are so many ex-Red Army men who fought stoutly in the civil war." Such enthusiasts of class-war policy did not care a jot whether the tried and trusted soldier of the revolution was technically fitted for the post out of which an expert was ejected to make room for him. Even as I write these lines, I am receiving letters from Moscow which show that the work of purgation is going on as ruthlessly as ever, notwithstanding

the fact that, meanwhile, many official exhortations in the way of moderation have been issued, and warnings have been uttered as regards the disastrous outcome of indiscriminate "purification". I have observed the same thing again and again in similar cases. An innovation in Soviet policy is always announced and staged in so extravagant and demagogic a way, that in practice the zealots o'erleap the saddle and fall on the other side. Thereafter, when much damage has been done, comes a fit of the blues and an appeal to reason. At long last, a few of the most disastrous excesses are pilloried, and perhaps in some instances an attempt is made to remedy the mischief—but, on the whole, the executive instruments of the policy continue at work in the old radical fashion.

The "sometimers", the unhappy remnants of the Russian bourgeoisie, are leading to-day in the Soviet State an existence more unhappy than that of Chinese coolies and the pariahs of Hindustan. Deprived of all possibility of earning a livelihood, they vegetate in enforced idleness, being only enabled to keep body and soul together through the kindness of friends and relatives, when they have any. Death by starvation or by suicide is an everyday incident in these circles. The reader must also remember that when I speak of the "vestiges" of the sometime bourgeoisie, though they are but few in comparison with their numerical strength under the tsars, they are still to be numbered by the hundred thousand.

## CHAPTER EIGHTEEN

### THE ARMED FORCES OF THE SOVIET UNION

#### 1. STRICT DISCIPLINE

THE reader may be surprised that I have reserved for the last chapter of my account of the Instruments of Soviet Authority the following description of the armed forces of the Soviet Union, and that the chapter is so short. The army, he will say, is, in every State, the leading instrument of power. But there are good reasons for the course I have adopted. My own experience as an army officer has convinced me that (with a good conscience) one can say very little of a foreign army which is known only from outside—especially when, like the Red Army, its characteristics are deliberately veiled in obscurity. I feel it necessary to confine myself to a description of the main differences between the Soviet army and the armies of other lands.

Just as the German Reichswehr grew out of the volunteer corps of the revolutionary epoch, so did the Red Army grow out of the Red Guards of the Russian revolution. But whereas the German volunteer corps consisted, to begin with, of the most efficient and the most disciplined among our privates and officers, the Russian Red Guards were mainly composed of disorderly elements, of marauders, who had stuck the red cockade on their caps because they were men of an unbridled disposition. The leaders of the Bolshevik Party, being realists, were quick to grasp that, while demagogic and anti-militarist phrase-making did good service in breaking up the tsarist army, a military force which they themselves might turn to useful account could in the long run only be created by rigid discipline and strict centralisation. At the very time when the Russian discovery of "soldiers' councils" was finding practical application in the new armies of Germany and Austria, these same councils had been deprived of effective influence in

bolshevik Russia. During the years of the civil war, the leaders of the Red Army (founded in April 1918) had established a draconian discipline, and such a discipline has been maintained down to the present day.

## 2. COMPULSORY SERVICE FOR ALL PERSONS OF BOTH SEXES

Regardless of revolutionary dogma, the Soviet State, when the civil war came to an end, made no attempt to do away with the standing army, but, instead, retained the system of universal compulsory service. The Soviet army system inaugurated on August 1, 1928, is still in force; and, in its far-reaching compulsory character, it puts even the new French system of national defence into the shade. Not merely is the entire male population liable to army service from the age of 20 to 40, but, in case of war, the whole feminine population can be called up, while in peace-time women can volunteer to serve with the colours. As regards men, they have two years of training in the twentieth and twenty-first years of their life, five years with the colours, from the age of 22 to that of 26, and thirteen years in the reserve, from the age of 27 to the age of 40. According to army regulations, women, too, can serve under arms, but this is a privilege reserved for working women, whereas women who belong to what are called the "non-working classes" must serve behind the front in the militia. Both in the army and in the navy, the real term of active service amounts to two years with the regulars, and to a term in the territorial army ranging from eight to eleven months according to the department concerned.

It is noteworthy that the army regulations contain no specifications as to the strength of the army, but according to the *Soviet Union Year-Book* the Red Army, including both regulars and territorials, now consists of 562,000 men. In the territorials, 180,000 men undergo training every year. In addition, year by year 520,000 men are "trained outside the army", these being the supernumeraries liable to military

service who remain after the annually recurring vacancies in the regular and territorial army have been filled. The men of this group, corresponding more or less to the Swiss militia, serve only six months in all, the term being spread over a period of five years. The net upshot is that round about 1,262,000 Soviet citizens receive military training in the Red Army every year.

But there are other soldiers besides those of the Red Army, namely the troops of the Ogpu, the frontier force, and the convoy troops. The Ogpu soldiers constitute a definite army, with divisions, independent brigades, regiments, and mixed sections of all arms. The frontier force is subdivided into sections each of which contain three companies of ordinary soldiers, one machine-gun company, two squadrons of cavalry, and a force of scouts. The convoy troops, finally, under the orders of the Commissariat for Home Affairs, consist of ten divisions, split up into brigades, regiments, and battalions, and used only to guard the transport of prisoners and to keep watch over the prisons.

The citizens of Soviet Russia, like those of France, begin their military training long before reaching the age at which they become liable to army service. Side by side with ordinary sports, drill plays a part in the amusements of every "Pioneer". Then, when young communists grow a little older and join the "Komsomol", they are taught the use of firearms. Militarism for young people is, in fact, systematically organised by the Commissariat for Education working hand in hand with the Commissariat for War. From the age of sixteen upwards, military training is compulsory upon all pupils at middle schools and universities, including theoretical and practical training in the use of rifles and machine-guns, in gas warfare, field service, and platoon firing. Reserve officers act as trainers.

### 3. POLITICAL SUPERVISION

There are various other military organisations which, though nominally private, ostensibly volunteer, are really organised by the State. I need describe only the most important of these, the "Osoavihim"—the "Society for Promoting National Defence, Aviation, and a Knowledge of the Use of Poison Gas". This society is said to have five million members. Like the "Pioneer" and the "Komsomol", Osoavihim gives practical military training, but its main purpose is the popularisation of the concept of the armed nation by means of a widely extended militarist propaganda among the workers and the collection of funds for the support of the Red Army and the Red Navy. From time to time it has given fleets of airplanes and squads of tanks to the Red Army; and, shortly after a Zeppelin visited Moscow in 1930, it organised a collection for the building of Russian air vessels of the same kind, and was able within a few months to get together several millions of roubles. Political complications with foreign lands are generally made the pretext for these demands upon the slenderly furnished purses of the Soviet proletariat, the slogan being "Our Answer to Chamberlain", "Our Answer to the Pope of Rome", and the like.

One matter in which army life in Russia differs from that of all other nations is the strict political supervision of the Red Army effected through the People's Commissariat for War. This political supervision was inaugurated owing to a very natural fear that the sometime tsarist officers (who had to be employed for the training of the Red Army, and still comprised nearly 10 per cent of all the Soviet army officers) might engage in counter-revolutionary intrigues. For this reason behind the shoulders of every army officer there stood a political assistant whose business it was to supervise the non-communist technical expert.

There thus came into existence a duplex system of command, the military expert (politically "suspect") being usually over-



shadowed by a communist. It need hardly be said that this state of affairs was unfavourable to the morale of the troops, and was retained so long as seemed indispensable, only until more than half of the officers of the Red Army were members of the Communist Party. On November 24, 1928, it was openly announced that the "consolidation of the Red Army as the weapon of the dictatorship of the working class" was now sufficiently advanced, and that the system of political supervision could be modified. Thenceforward orders which related to purely military matters would not have to be countersigned by the political commissaries, and the political commissaries would be withdrawn whenever the commanding officers had passed through the Military-Political Academy—this signifying that they were thoroughly trustworthy Party men.

The bolshevisation of the army is intended to serve two ends at once. First of all, as already explained, it is designed to prevent the use of the Red Army for subversive purposes by any officer who may have developed bonapartist inclinations. Secondly, it is hoped that all the Soviet citizens who have passed through a period of army training will carry bolshevik ideas far and wide throughout the people. During the first year of service with the regular army, the official political instruction occupies 280 hours, and in the second year of service 170 hours. A like aim is pursued by newspapers for the soldiers, by army clubs, and various other social institutions in the barracks and the camps. This political activity is nevertheless intertwined with general educational work, so that the soldier who passes into the reserve (going to take his place in village life or in the factory) is not only equipped with the tools of the political agitator, but also stands out from the ruck as a well-educated man. Let me add that by parades, smart uniforms, orders, commendations, the insignia of rank and of prowess with the rifle, and so on, everything is done which has been done by militarist States for centuries to promote the self-satisfaction of uniformed citizens. Add that the soldiers of the Red Army and the blue-

jackets of the Red Navy are better fed and better clad than almost any other members of the Soviet population and that the officers in both the services are comparatively well paid, and one cannot but wonder how it is that the influence of army and navy in the New Russia has so far been small, and that there are unceasing complaints as to the lack of entrants at the military academies and of aspirants for a military career in general.

#### 4. THE ARMAMENTS INDUSTRY

In the domain of the armaments industry, the Soviet State makes very vigorous efforts, and acts perhaps more purposively than in any other field. The Five-Year Plan is largely directed towards military ends. Indeed, the whole plan, which was in part the outcome of war panic, is predominantly concerned with the development of an armaments industry which shall make Russia independent of imports of war material. In this connexion it is peculiarly interesting to note that the new centres of heavy industry have been set up at great distances from the western frontier of the realm, namely in the Urals and in western Siberia. Moreover, new works which are concerned with the production of other things than munitions are all being established on lines which will enable them to be switched over at short notice from peace production to the supply of war materials—an arrangement which the "anti-militarist and anti-imperialist Soviet State" has borrowed from the greatest military power of the day, France.

All the same, the technical equipment of the Red Army would appear to be inferior to that of the western European armies and of the Polish army as well. Besides, for war purposes Polish industry is unquestionably somewhat more efficient than that of Soviet Russia. The Russian artillery, too, is by no means up to date. In Moscow to-day great stress is laid upon the importance of heavy guns and upon anti-aircraft artillery; and of late motor developments have gone rapidly ahead in

the Red Army. At the May review in 1931, the march-past of the army motor section (including 160 tanks belonging to Moscow and the same number belonging to Leningrad) lasted forty minutes. Light tanks are chiefly made in Russia, but heavy ones are imported from England. As regards the separate branches of military service, that of aviation would appear to be the best equipped, and we are given to understand that Russian aviators are extremely efficient. Certainly Russia is quite as good as Poland in this department.

Not much that is good can be said about the Red Navy. It has no modern vessels, even though the old ones have been refurbished as well as possible. The naval authorities, however, are trying to turn modern discoveries to the best account; and it is said that training and discipline are excellent. The main stress is laid upon mine warfare and perhaps on submarines, but here likewise there is a very serious lack of seaworthy vessels. Notwithstanding this, the Red Navy is a force that would have to be reckoned with in the Baltic and the Black Sea.

*BOOK SIX*

**BOLSHEVIK ECONOMICS**



## CHAPTER NINETEEN

### THE ROAD

#### I. THE GOAL

To every bolshevik it seems so much a matter of course that the Soviet State "is establishing socialism", that the phrase is parroted by them all without any meaning. For thirteen years the establishment of socialism has been going on in Russia without intermission; the field of nationalised or communalised economics has expanded by leaps and bounds; the vestiges of the old capitalist system are being systematically cleared away: and yet, strange as it may seem, scarcely any one in Russia has a word to say about the form likely to be assumed by the ultimate product of this "purposive economy". For myself, during the four years I lived in Russia, I conversed with bolsheviks day after day in Moscow and the provinces, and on railway journeys through Siberia and Turkestan; these talks were interminable, relating to God and the universe, to death and the devil; but never once was there any word about the communist State of the future. In the Soviet press, "socialisation" is a standing rubric, and to prophesy is perennial; but the final aim of Marxism would seem no longer to exist. Of course it remains the final aim, and is drummed into the students at the Red universities, but only, so to say, as the vanishing point of a perspective view, and never as a concrete notion. The idea of the socialist State persists, but it is not a vital, not an essential part of the conceptual equipment of Soviet Russia.

The attitude of contemporary bolsheviks towards the Marxian State of the future, the State which (one would think) must be the Holy Grail of which the Russian revolutionists are in search, has perhaps been most effectively revealed by Mayakovsky, the Soviet imaginative writer (born 1891, recently



ested in a materialistic, palpable, robust policy. Bolshevism is not so much a philosophy as a movement, a revolution. The economic history of bolshevism only becomes comprehensible in the light of this elementary fact, and those who try to understand it, not as a policy, but as an economic science or an economic philosophy, inevitably draw false inferences and limn deceptive pictures. In the following pages, therefore, I shall only describe what has actually happened and what is actually happening in the domain of Soviet economics.

In the year 1917, Russia had been defeated in a great war. During one of those moments in which history is made, the revolutionary explosion paralysed the natural productive forces of the country. No one was thinking about work. The masses—the workers and peasants—set themselves to dividing up the property of a numerically small but incredibly wealthy section of the population. They pillaged and seized the dwelling-houses, the warehouses, the banks; they partitioned the great estates and appropriated all the means of production, the live-stock and the dead machines. There are no figures to show how much national property was squandered during these years of storm. Beyond question, however, the bolshevik State, rising upon the ruins of the Old Russia, still had abundant resources at its disposal. It hastened to possess itself of the most valuable elements of the national property: the entire industrial apparatus, the factories, the transport system, the money in the banks, art treasures, jewellery. It cancelled all existing debts: not only the liabilities of the tsarist State, not only the obligations to capitalists at home and abroad; but every kind of financial burden upon expropriated large-scale industry, large-scale commerce, and banking. Having repudiated such liabilities, completely disburdened, the bolsheviks assumed control of a notable proportion of the national economy.

To-day the bolsheviks try to make out that they took over from tsarism nothing but debts, nothing but the blunders and confusions of the old regime. If anything fails to work satis-



factorily, the universal formula is "disastrous relics of the autocracy". Lenin, of course, was far too able a man to have dreamed of establishing socialism betwixt night and morning, and of building the new State out of nothing. As a consistent Marxian, he could never have visioned anything of the kind. The first phase of bolshevik economic policy, that of unqualified communism, must, rather, be regarded as the outcome of an excessively high estimate of the value of the heritage from the old days. The semi-official Party writings of the period in question show plainly enough that the general belief of the revolutionists was that a period of economic development had been reached in which the decapitation of the economic hierarchy would suffice to effect a transformation of highly developed capitalism into State socialism. The assumption, of course, was false, being based upon an erroneous estimate of the nature of the contemporary world economy; and it was false above all as regards Russia, still in the early phase of capitalism. But, false though it was, the assumption was made. If I doubt whether Lenin was so outstanding a genius as is often supposed, it is precisely because he was at first far too ready to believe that a thorough-going socialist system could be established almost forthwith.

## 2. WAR COMMUNISM

During the genuinely communistic period of bolshevism, which in point of time was coincident with that of the civil war, anything economically tangible was nationalised: manufacturing industry, urban trade, transport, art, and every kind of cultural enterprise. But these things were not only nationalised, they were communalised in the fullest sense of the term. People travelled gratis on the railways, went gratis to the theatre, received without payment their "payok" (their ration of the necessities of life), paid neither rates nor taxes. This phase of utopian socialism had only one serious flaw, but the flaw was a large one! The greatest of all the sections of Russian

economic life, agriculture, the land, passed from a higher social form (higher in the Marxian sense), that of State and large-scale proprietorship, to a lower social form, that of peasant proprietorship, the lowest form of private ownership. Marxian theoreticians will never forgive the bolsheviks for their failure to retain intact the huge royal domains and the estates of the great landowners, richly supplied with means of production, and therefore able to serve as the scaffolding for the socialisation of agriculture. At bottom, however, Lenin was not a Marxian but a practical revolutionist who flung the capitalist broken meats to the peasants (85 per cent of the population) in order to ensure their support. Besides, the bolshevik leaders were townsmen, with the intellectual and social limitations of their urban origin, so that they really cared very little about what went on in the peasant wilderness. It was enough for them, as a provisional measure, to occupy the strongholds, the conspicuous town centres of the national economy. For the rest, they expected that the moral effect of establishing an urban and proletarian integral socialism to be so stupendous that the peasants would of necessity enter the communist ranks; and indeed they were at that date confident that the bolshevik revolution would speedily become dominant throughout Europe.

Bolshevik historians in days to come will, doubtless, have a different explanation to account for the flaws of this early communist period. They will say that the proletariat, at the time when it seized power, had quite enough to do with assuming control of industry, and lacked the technical skill requisite for the management of great landed estates. The contention will be sound. A remarkable fact is, however, that the bolsheviks should be willing to admit a certain lack of omniscience in respect of their initial agrarian policy, although in all other domains they were at that date suffering from megalomania. Had they, during the years of the civil war, confined themselves to the attempt to manage things for which they were genuinely competent, they would have refrained from taking charge of

industry and commerce. In both of these fields they were utterly incompetent. During the epoch of complete socialisation, their economics were bankrupt all along the line. In the year 1921, the industrial production of Russia was less than one-tenth of what it had been in 1913, and trade had sunk to the level of the most primitive barter. Economically considered, Russia was nothing more than a heap of ruins, and its population could only keep body and soul together because the townsfolk were able to plunder the peasants, who continued to produce by the methods of individualist capitalism. It was inevitable, therefore, that the failure of the crops in the year 1921 should lead to millions of deaths from starvation.

### 3. NEP

Lenin was courageous enough to draw the necessary inferences from the recognition of his disastrous mistake—but his successors have never shown the like courage. He took a big step backwards. By the famous New Economic Policy, known for short as “Nep”, private capitalism was re-established in a large part of the economic field. Lenin, indeed, always insisted that this reversal of policy was to be no more than a preliminary to a fresh advance towards thorough-going communism; but he made it equally plain that the reversal was “definite, and likely to last for a long time”. The principal characteristics of Nep were as follows: the re-establishment of private trade; the relinquishment of public control of the minor industrial and commercial undertakings; and the replacement of compulsory levies of agricultural produce and of payments in kind from the villages, by free purchase and the levying of taxes in money. The bolshevik State continued to reserve for itself large-scale industry and transport; above all, the key industries, which were run as State departments or through the instrumentality of co-operatives. The New Economic Policy was effective, from 1922 to 1925, and perhaps even to 1927, there was a period of recovery in Russia. Even

though in respect of details the Soviet statistics may be open to criticism; it is generally agreed that by 1927 the pre-war standards of industrial production had been regained. Agriculture still lagged behind, favourable statistics notwithstanding.

But the successes of the Nep period, as proved by the figures, were dearly bought. Let us first inquire how these successes were possible. The bolsheviks scarcely trouble to deny that almost all the State and cooperative enterprises were being run at a loss. Even those that were reputed to be paying concerns, were only this to a very dubious extent, seeing that the declared profits were not proportional to the outpourings of capital necessary in all the Soviet industries. The bolsheviks have, in fact, shown themselves masters in the art of cooking balance sheets. Who, then, in the last resort paid for reconstruction? To a minor extent the re-establishment of Russian industry was financed out of the resources handed down as a legacy from capitalist days, but the major part of the cost came out of the pockets of the peasants. Here the yield of the agrarian taxes was much less important than the working of the so-called "scissors". This term is used by the bolsheviks to denote the discrepancy between the prices of agricultural and industrial products. Down to the year 1928, the discrepancy was colossal. Whereas the products of Soviet manufacturing industry were sold to the peasants at extremely high prices in which the exorbitant cost of production was allowed for, the peasants were compelled to hand over agricultural produce at prices fixed by the State, prices which bore no reasonable ratio to the purchasing power of money. The official figures, according to which during the years of Nep the ratio between industrial and agricultural prices was 1 : 2, make out far too good a case for the Soviet State. In the summer of 1925, a study of the actual market prices showed me that the ratio was 1 : 5. When we take into account that, as already said, the peasants form 85 per cent of the Russian population, the financial "miracle of reconstruction" does not seem so miraculous after all. Zinovieff, in the days when he was still

one of the chiefs of the Soviet State, admitted frankly enough: "We have hitherto been living at the expense of the peasants." To complete the picture, let me remind the reader that this milch cow, the peasantry, is accorded by the Soviet electoral system only one-fifth of the political influence enjoyed by the urban population. But the New Russia is called the "first workers' and peasants' State in history".

How did the Russian peasant react to exploitation on so gigantic a scale? To begin with, during the years 1922 to 1925, the muzhik found the New Economic Policy advantageous. Again and again, when travelling in the country districts, I was told: "In the days of the civil war they [the rulers] did their best to strangle us. They came to our villages with machine-guns and took away our grain. Now we have to pay taxes, which are high, and industrial products are scandalously dear and of very poor quality; but we can plan out our work once more, we have become peasants again." The bolsheviks were incompetent to promote the continuance of this favourable attitude in the countryside. Lenin was dead, and his successors (fiercely struggling one with another for power) believed that the pace of the revolution must be quickened up once more. It cannot be denied that the New Economic Policy had involved certain drawbacks which were almost intolerable to the bolshevik regime. With oriental crudity, the profiteers had rushed into the reopened markets, were gaining vast sums there, and, worst of all, were making a parade of their riches. The Cheka, thereupon, set to work with brutal energy, closing the well-stocked shops, confiscating the goods, and deporting or shooting the newly enriched owners. It soon became apparent, however, that even the more solid and personally modest men of business were a danger to the regime. Despite the strict labour laws and the enforcement of high rates of wages, they could produce and sell more cheaply than the socialist State. It cannot be said that this mattered much to the State enterprises, seeing that there was a general shortage of goods, so that the consumers had to buy the dear products of State enterprise as well as the

cheaper manufactures of the private producers; but the comparative success of private enterprise made a bad impression upon the public, disclosing as it did the inefficiency of socialist production.

#### 4. THE THROTTLING OF NEP

Already before 1924, the Bolshevik Party, though still theoretically committed to Nep, began in practice to throttle it. The authorities increased the taxes heavily, made the labour laws relating to private enterprises more severe, and began to cut off from capitalist employers the supply of raw materials, half-manufactured and manufactured articles. At the same time the political police was giving a wider and ever wider interpretation to the paragraphs in the criminal code directed against the "economic counter-revolution". Owing to this systematic strangling of private trade in the towns, small-scale capitalist initiative was compelled more and more to seek an outlet in the countryside, where, indeed, in conformity with the predominantly peasant economic structure of Russia, it had already discovered its main field of activity. The less people could buy in private stores, and the dearer the private traders' goods were rendered by the aforesaid measures, the more difficult did it become for the peasants to purchase the industrial commodities they needed. State trading and co-operative trading, though nominally nation-wide, were unable to provide an efficient substitute for private trade in the villages in respect either of quantity or of kind. Although, as far as statistics were concerned, State industrial production was increasing, the list of "deficit commodities" grew longer and longer during these years of reconstruction; and, in addition, the State trading authorities showed themselves preposterously incapable of bringing their goods to the right place at the right time.

Now became apparent the extremely questionable character of one of the fundamental theses of socialism. The Marxian

purposive economic system proved far more incapable than "anarchic" capitalist economy to adapt production and distribution to the needs of the market. Again and again there was a lack of articles of prime necessity, while goods less urgently needed were offered but found no purchasers. The most conspicuous outcome of this state of affairs was the compulsory assignment of goods. The supreme productive and distributive authorities of the economic bureaucracy compelled the cooperative retail sales organisations, which could scarcely ever obtain the goods they wanted in the necessary quantities and the desired qualities, to buy other wares in supplement. Except for cigarettes and State vodka, hardly a single article of commerce can be named of which there was not a shortage from time to time and in one place or another. During the years of my experience in Moscow, the Soviet capital, it was occasionally impossible to buy any nails, any incandescent lamps, any letter paper, any soap. This, be it noted, was in the "successful" period of reconstruction, and not to-day, when everything is rationed and there is a shortage of every commodity. No one can have a clear notion of the outcome of a purposive economy unless he has lived for a long time in the New Russia and has kept house for himself. Directly any commodity passes under the control of the socialist government, it disappears from the market. The wits of Moscow exemplified this phenomenon by the following anecdote. In the Council of Peoples' Commissaries the campaign against prostitution was under discussion. One of the speakers proposed that the conduct of the affair should be handed over to the Ministry for Health—and the Ministry for Home Trade. At this there were exclamations of astonishment. The chairman deprecated jesting upon a matter so serious. "But I assure you, Comrade Chairman," said the proposer of the motion, "that I am not joking. All the commodities over which the Commissariat for Home Trade has assumed control have vanished from the market. Obviously, then, it should take charge of this branch of commerce as well!"

Again and again it became plain to candid observers that, notwithstanding the official proclamation of a steady increase in all branches of production since 1925, there was in truth a growing lack of commodities. Rationing began already in 1926, at first in textiles, which form the main constituent of the peasants' demands. During the first years of the New Economic Policy, the peasants could supply their needs by buying from private traders, who dealt chiefly in the produce of handicrafts, and also had remnants of the old stocks. Even so, the countryfolk had to pay famine prices. The suppression of private trade made the peasant consumers increasingly dependent upon State industry and State commerce. Since the State was, however, far from being in a position to satisfy the demands of the countryside, and since after a time the urban distributive stores began to restrict supplies very greatly and to sell only to persons who had cards of membership, small-scale and illicit private trade was resumed. Persons who had a few hundred roubles would engage a dozen unemployed and send them one by one to the town cooperative stores, each of them with instructions to buy a yard of stuff on his cooperative or trade-union ticket. The trader would convey the cloth thus obtained to the villages and sell it there at a high profit. The middleman in the village was usually a "kulak".

### 5. THE "KULAK"

It is time to say a few words about the "kulaks", concerning whom there is so much talk in Russia to-day. The literal meaning of the word "kulak" is "fist". For a long time in Russia, before the bolsheviks were ever heard of, the name of "kulak" was applied to a well-to-do peasant who exploited the poorer peasants. But the Russian "kulak" is a very different sort of person from what we in Germany call a Grossbauer, a "big peasant". When we use this term we mean a peasant farmer who employs labourers, cultivates a considerable area of ground, has an abundance of livestock and a good supply



of farm implements. But the fundamental characteristic of the Russian kulak is that he is a shrewd trader. In the Russian village, the well-to-do peasant usually kept the village shop, and was in most instances a vodka distiller and the keeper of a drinking-saloon. To these occupations he added that of usurer, lending money to his poorer brethren, making them dependent upon him, and sucking them dry. Such men were feared and hated; they were to be found in almost every Russian village, and were a social pest.

As we have seen, the increasing lack of commodities in Soviet Russia furthered the influence of the kulaks. This led the government to increase the pressure on the villages. From 1926 onwards, the New Economic Policy was systematically abandoned in the peasant economy as well as in the economy of town life. By graduating agricultural taxation in proportion to the wealth of the rural taxpayers and by increasing the absolute volume of the taxes, the authorities attempted to check the growth of kulak enterprise. These tactics were a disastrous failure. They did not succeed in suppressing the peasant traders, but they deprived the peasant as a grain producer of all stimulus to increase the area under cultivation and the yield of the land. When we recall the fact that, thanks to the revolution, the amount of land farmed by an individual peasant had already become extremely small (one whom the Russians call a "rich peasant" would among us be denoted a cottar), it becomes obvious that the new fiscal policy of the Party was positively suicidal. Even from the outlook of an attempt to make a political distinction between the elements respectively friendly and hostile to the Soviet government, this policy was mistaken. The average result of the revolution had been to equalise the size of the peasant farms, the same area of land having originally been allotted to the poor peasant and to the middle peasant and the rich peasant. In most parts of the country, especially where the large estates had been broken up, the amount of stock on the different farms had been substantially equalised. It followed, therefore, that the differences

between richer and poorer which had arisen within so brief a period could not invariably be the outcome of varying degrees of scrupulousness or unscrupulousness. In most instances those who had become richer were persons who had been more efficient and more industrious. Thus a considerable proportion of those who had been poor peasants when the revolution occurred, had in subsequent years become moderately well-to-do; whereas others of those who had been among the village poor under the old regime, and also some who had once been well-to-do, had now fallen into poverty. The reader must get out of his head the romantic idea that the Russian peasantry is a homogeneous mass of extremely vigorous and efficient persons who had only become poor as the outcome of tsarist oppression. There have always been in the Russian villages more ne'er-do-wells than in the villages of most other countries, this being in part, no doubt, the fault of the ruling classes, who for centuries have failed to do anything to promote the education of the common people. But, the state of affairs being what I have described, the bolsheviks, acting as always by rule of thumb, making war systematically upon the kulaks and soon extending the campaign into an attack upon the middle peasants as well, deprived the tillers of the soil of every stimulus to progress. The pampered village poor showed no gratitude. They were glad enough to benefit by the expropriation of the well-to-do, but were incapable of carrying on agricultural production with the like efficiency.

#### 6. BALANCE-SHEET OF NEP

Towards the year 1926, when the reconstruction period drew to a close, the general picture of Russian economic life was as follows. The efforts of the bolsheviks had restored industrial production, as far as quantity was concerned, to somewhere near the pre-war level. The general lack of commodities was less extreme than it had been during the period of war communism, but was unquestionably increasing once more.

The quality of the goods that were being produced was extremely bad, so that they wore out with unprecedented rapidity, this partly accounting for the discrepancy between increasing production and a growing lack of goods. A further explanation of the discrepancy was, presumably, the existence of a very large percentage of totally unusable products which were, nevertheless, in many instances included among the statistics of production. The State distributive apparatus was absurdly incompetent; but the failure of the "purposive" producers to understand the needs of the market was somewhat less conspicuous now that there was a lack of almost every kind of goods. Private trade was still going on, especially in the countryside, where it retained a considerable volume, but it was being steadily throttled. The peasants were still supplying a sufficiency of grain for the towns and for export; and, thanks to the "scissors", they were providing enough money for the Moloch of State industry. But the chief and the most alarming symptom of this period was the relapse of the peasants into the despair which had characterised them throughout the days of the civil war, during the time when grain was being confiscated.

The Bolshevik Party had reached the parting of the ways. It must either abandon the attempt to bring about a hasty industrialisation of the pre-eminently agrarian land of Russia, and must do all in its power to promote the welfare of the peasants, encouraging them to produce grain for export, and thus securing foreign money in exchange; or else continue the urban-proletarian trend, which would involve intensified exploitation of the rural districts by the towns. In the course of the violent struggles within the Party during the years 1926 and 1927, when the contending factions were respectively grouped around Stalin and Trotsky, arguments about the Party trend were conspicuous, although veiled, more or less, behind demagogic phraseology. Trotsky voiced the demand for the continuance of the leftward trend (though his sincerity in this matter may be doubted), and openly accused Stalin

of friendliness towards the kulaks. Stalin, on the other hand, declared that his policy was one which took the towns into consideration as well as the countryside—while he passively favoured the continuance of the New Economic Policy. In the bottom of their hearts, the members of both factions realised more or less clearly that there could be no return to uncompromising communism without endangering the bolshevik dominion. It was becoming plain, moreover (and became plainer still during subsequent years), that the communist ideal takes vengeance on its champions, for the reason that faithfulness to it makes half-measures impossible, since it necessitates a perpetual movement towards the Left. I am inclined to regard the whole development of Soviet policy during the last six or seven years as enforced by circumstances.

#### 7. THE PEASANT GOES ON STRIKE

During the late autumn of 1927 there became manifest a profoundly significant process. There was a decline in the yield of grain, slow to begin with, but speedily accelerated. This began in the middle of October, and by the New Year it had become catastrophic. The figures for December and January were only a fraction of those of the previous year. There was no obvious cause for the decline, seeing that the harvest of 1927 was quite as good as had been the harvests of 1926 and 1925, and in the barns of the peasants there must obviously have been stores greatly exceeding what was necessary for domestic consumption. The inference was clear—the muzhik had begun a policy of passive resistance. His patience was exhausted; he was "fed up"; he was weary of handing over the produce of his toil to the government for copecks, while buying insufficient quantities of badly made manufactured articles for roubles. In a word, this movement of passive resistance was a protest against the "scissors"; a protest against the suppression of individualist progress; a protest against the mendacity of all that was implied in the name of

the Workers' and Peasants' State. There was no overt propaganda, there was no trace of any organisation to encourage a general refusal to deliver grain to the townsfolk; the whole thing had the simplicity of a natural phenomenon. The peasants were showing themselves determined to draw the most primary inferences from the agrarian policy of the Party. Each peasant seems to have said to himself: "You rail at me as a kulak, you treat me and tax me as a kulak, if I produce more grain than suffices for my own requirements! Very well then, I shall only till as much ground as will produce what will satisfy my own and my family's needs, keeping for a rainy day such stores as I still have on hand." There was a supplementary factor. The Party, which at this date anticipated an open breach with England, was parading the spectre of imminent war so effectively that the Russian peasants, with the selfishness natural to their kind, wanted to safeguard themselves against so disagreeable an eventuality.

The "strike" against the sale of grain which began in the late autumn of 1927 was the first word uttered in public matters by the Russian peasant since the days of the civil war. How did the Party, how did the Soviet government, react to this occurrence, threatening, as it did, the foundations of the extant economic system? The reader already knows. At the outset, the Party failed to notice what was happening. Completely engrossed in its internal struggle, in the fight for power that was going on between the rival factions, it had temporarily dropped the reins of government, so that three months elapsed before the rulers began to face the imminent danger. (See above, p. 138.) Not until the Trotskyists had been defeated, not until January 1928, did the official Soviet apparatus appear to become cognisant of the dumb revolution that was going on all over the countryside. Even then the Soviet press affected to believe that the titanic failure of the grain supply was the outcome of "errors committed by the lower-grade officials". The grain buyers must have gone to sleep at their posts; the various grain trusts must have been engaged in

mutually destructive competition; the peasants must have been injudiciously handled by the petty officials.

The first practical measures to overcome the evil were economically sound. All the available supplies of manufactured goods were rushed into the villages, in the hope of stimulating the peasants to sell grain that they might have money wherewith to buy manufactured articles. But this did not suffice, for the reason that the authorities continued to offer too low a price for agricultural produce, and especially for grain. There was no more time to lose. Unless the towns could get bread forthwith, the prime workers in industry would be starved, and manufacture would come to a standstill. Sharper measures were adopted. Arrears of taxation and the provision of grain put aside for seed in the spring of 1927 were ruthlessly levied. Furthermore a supplementary agricultural tax was imposed in the form of what was termed a "voluntary levy", which the villages had to pay for road-making, education, dispensaries, and the like. As officially announced, this "voluntary levy" was to amount to 35 per cent of the previous agricultural tax, but in practice it was much higher, often amounting to 100 per cent. By the imposition of these burdens, the peasants were constrained to sell their produce. If they refused to be bled, the State had recourse to the well-tried method of violence. In Siberia, and in certain parts of European Russia as well, grain was seized without compensation by the soldiers, just as it had been during the days of war communism. In addition, the authorities put into active operation paragraph 107 of the criminal code, which declared the "speculative" withholding of goods to be punishable by imprisonment and by confiscation of the property concerned. The last turn of the screw was to decree a "peasant loan" amounting to one hundred million roubles, which was also levied by compulsion. Rykoff subsequently admitted that in certain regions the demand for "subscriptions" to the loan had been enforced with the aid of the police!

Thanks to the agricultural tax, the voluntary levy, the

compulsory loan, confiscation, and the enforcement of paragraph 107, during the first quarter of the year 1928 the "grain campaign" was fairly successful. The towns and the industrial producers got enough bread to keep body and soul together, although the export of grain fell off considerably. But there remained upon the battlefield—for in sooth it was a battlefield—plundered villages and desperate peasants. The country-folk had in many instances, in order to escape reprisals, been compelled to sell things vitally necessary to themselves. But these events were no more than foreshadowings of the storm which was to burst upon the Russian countryside a year later.

Economically considered, the agrarian policy of the spring of 1928 must be regarded as a capitulation of the Party management to Trotskyism, insofar as this was a mouthing of phrases against the peasantry. Stalin, in fact, was not ashamed, once he had succeeded in getting rid of Trotsky, to enforce many of the proposals that had been made by the sometime leader now driven forth into the wilderness (Turkestan). Even Trotsky's demand for an enforced speeding-up of the industrial process was taken over from the vanquished generalissimo.

## CHAPTER TWENTY

### THE FIVE-YEAR PLAN

#### I. A FRESH ADVANCE TOWARDS SOCIALISM

DURING the winter of 1928-1929, the failure of the Soviet industry assumed threatening proportions. Although larger amounts of capital were being invested, the tempo of its development had slackened, and in some branches of production the movement had actually become retrograde. There was a manifest decline in the productivity of labour, for the reason that the authorities were afraid of making the workers discontented by insisting on stricter discipline. No less serious were the defects of the State management of enterprise. Since the discussions concerning this decline of productivity, though they had not enabled the Party to gain any clear light upon the concrete economic issues, had intensified the theoretical and political contrast between the rival trends (an advance toward socialism, on the one hand, and a putting of the brakes on socialisation, on the other), the answer to be made by the bolsheviks could not long remain in doubt. They were constrained to decide in favour of enforced socialisation, an acceleration of industrial development regardless of financial difficulties, and regardless of the needs of the peasants though these form the overwhelming majority of the population. Lenin, perhaps, who had held a position of such outstanding authority, might have been able to turn the Red wheel backwards once more, and to introduce a renovated Nep. But those who remained as magnates after the defeat of the opposition—Stalin and his henchmen—had no power to do this. If they were to retain their supremacy in the Party, they had to move to the Left. For this reason, during the spring of 1928, a renewed hostility towards the peasantry was supplemented by a revolutionising of industrial policy, beginning with a search



for scapegoats—witness the Shachty trial, and a number of like affairs. There was now inaugurated a series of raids upon the unhappy experts, engineers, technicians, and foremen, who were to be held accountable for the manifest failure of the industrial system. The amount of manufactured articles was to be rapidly increased, and “sabotage by miscreants was to be countered by a redoubling of revolutionary effort”. No doubt it was unfortunate that the campaign against the aforesaid “miscreants” would deprive Soviet enterprise of the few outstanding experts who still remained as a legacy from the old days, but this was unavoidable. It was more important to save the face of the government than to do what was economically reasonable.

All the same, the overwhelming majority of the Party was far from approving the new trend, which involved a deliberate abandonment of Nep. During the summer of 1928 there came into existence what was called the “Right deviation”; a new opposition which included among its members almost all the old intimates of Lenin, together with Rykoff, Tomskey, and Buharin (see above, p. 127 et seq.). They demanded that for the time being a conciliatory attitude should be adopted towards the peasants, the bread producers of the country, and that the tempo of industrial development should be slackened. Those who expected that Stalin would adopt the same method that he had adopted a year before—that he would crush the leaders of the new opposition as he had crushed the Trotskyists, and would then take over their policy—proved mistaken. The dictator did, indeed, crush the Right, and he compelled its leaders to make the usual avowals of penitence; but thereafter he continued to pursue his own leftward trend, presumably because he had more reason to dread the doctrinal and political Trotskyist movement which was still going on beneath the surface of things than the economic movement initiated by Buharin’s group.

## 2. BIRTH OF THE FIVE-YEAR PLAN

Thus originated the famous Five-Year Plan, which signified a frank admission that the days of Nep were over and that the ship of State was again being steered towards uncompromising socialism. Yet this was done at a moment when the economic crisis had reached a climax. The maltreatment of the peasants, which had been going on for years, had now had its full repercussion in the towns, where there was an undeniable shortage of flour. Beginning with bread, a coupon system had gradually to be applied to the supply of most of the necessities of life. There was a shortage of almost all the articles of prime need, and this in the twelfth year of the great bolshevik revolution! Hitherto the chronic lack of supplies had been explained as due to "growing-pains". Now, when the shortage extended all along the line, it was impossible to go on accounting for it on economic grounds, since this would have implied a manifest failure of the system. The authorities therefore declared that the saboteurs, the kulaks, and above all the members of the "bourgeoisie, now dreading its final destruction" were responsible for the extant "minor" inconveniences. For the rest, "socialist reconstruction, proceeding straight towards its goal, had reached the last phase, and the process of uncompromising socialisation was being inaugurated". This theory was a mere pretext, and was formulated to mask grave embarrassments, but those who had excogitated it did not hesitate to show the utmost possible energy in translating it into realities. In accordance with the Five-Year Plan, which came into effective operation on October 1, 1928, 78.4 milliards of roubles were to be invested in the State economy. A number of professors and economic experts had drafted this plan, working out its details in a comprehensive publication. This treatise informed the public where the 78.4 milliards of roubles (a sum more than double the whole amount of reparations to be paid in sixty years by the Germans in accordance with the Young Plan) were to be obtained. It was

specified in the Five-Year Plan that the yield of *manufacturing* industry was to be doubled or trebled; and to the extent of one-fourth agriculture was to be socialised, this meaning that 24 million peasant farms were to be transformed into 8 million socialised farms.

### 3. THE PEASANTS' WAR

Once more the new trend weighed most heavily upon the peasants, defenceless as they were and politically undeveloped. The harsh way in which the Russian peasants were treated during the year 1929 was shown plainly enough by the exodus of the peasants of German stock. I have no space here to give details of the campaign which went on for two years under the war-cry "Destroy the kulaks!" Whereas to begin with, by all kinds of blood-sucking methods, the peasants were forced into the collective enterprises, in the end the movement took the form of a quasi-voluntary flight into these enterprises. The despairing peasants flung away their possessions, accepted copecks for things worth roubles, in the hope of saving at least a remnant; and they combined to form collective farms in the vain hope that the authorities, having gained what was wanted, would at least provide them with nourishment. There are no figures available to show how much national property was squandered in Russia by this compulsory collectivisation during the winter of 1929-1930; but the upshot was that the meat supply of the country collapsed, that the autumn sowings fell enormously below the average, and that, as a final outcome, in place of many millions of productive peasant farms, there came into existence some tens of thousands of so-called collective farms without the material requisites for the performance of their economic task. There were certain regions in which the percentage of collectivisations specified in the Five-Year Plan had already been exceeded by the beginning of the second year; and there were others in which, by that time, 50, 75, and even 100 per cent of the land was said to have been "practically socialised".

Will it be believed that the ruling Party and its press not merely went on for months watching this process of economic self-mutilation, but that they continued to be full of enthusiasm at these "extraordinary successes"? The frenzy lasted until March 2, 1930. Then the manifestations of a sore head after a debauch began in the form of a letter from Stalin to the Soviet newspapers, in which the dictator, who had hitherto been the leading spirit in the war against the kulaks, cynically declared that the lower executive instruments had been made drunken by their success. They had obviously believed that socialism could be established in the countryside within twenty-four hours. It was "actually true" that strong pressure had been exercised upon the peasants, and that great harshness had been exhibited towards the middle peasants and the poor peasants as well as towards the rich peasants. There must be *an end of this. In future collectivisation must only occur voluntarily*, and after a careful study had been made of the necessary economic conditions in the case. Stalin's hypocritical letter (one of the most repulsive documents of bolshevism) was speedily followed and amplified by a decree from the Central Committee of the Party which contained an even franker admission of the defects in the tactics hitherto pursued, and recommended moderation for the future. The obvious reason for this sudden change of direction was that the authorities had become afraid of a catastrophic failure of the harvest in 1930 if any more individualist peasant farms should be destroyed. The desire to placate the countryfolk, insofar as this was still possible, was shown by those passages in the decree which announced that the anti-religious campaign in the villages would be stopped. It remains uncertain how far the March change of policy was inspired by grave fears for the safety of the regime. Beyond question it is a remarkable fact that well-to-do peasants who had relatives in the Red Army were expressly exempted from further pressure—and we know that in certain regions Red detachments had refused to take action against rebellious villages.

## 4. CATCHING-UP AND OUTSTRIPPING

Throughout the era of the Five-Year Plan, bolshevik economic leadership has been animated by the conviction, not only that there can be no serious reversal of the new policy, but also that the tempo of socialisation as a whole and of industrialisation in particular will be prescribed by the "given external and internal conditions". In a speech made to the Party plenum in November 1928, Stalin disclosed this obsession very plainly, saying: "If we were not compelled to take these external and internal conditions into account, we could advance at a slower pace. We have risen to power in a country whose technical development is horribly backward, and we are surrounded by a number of capitalist countries which stand at a much higher industrial level, countries whose technical development is advancing by leaps and bounds. That explains the remarkable fact that our land, which has the most advanced form of State known to the world, nevertheless has an extraordinarily retrograde technical system to serve as the foundation of socialism and of the Soviet power. Do you believe that in face of such a contradiction we can achieve the final victory of socialism? What must we do to liquidate the contradiction? . . . If we are to lead Socialism to victory, the capitalist countries must not only be caught up but outstripped in the technical and economic domains. If we fail to catch them up and to outstrip them, they will crush us!" Stalin was only paraphrasing the words of Lenin, who had said: "Either we shall perish, or else we shall catch up and outstrip the most advanced countries in the economic field." The impression that the bolsheviks are not altogether satisfied with the tempo of their economic revolution is emphasised by the following dolorous admission towards the close of Stalin's speech: "If we only had a proletarian dictatorship in other, economically more advanced countries, such as Germany and France, we should not have to speed up our industrial evolution so furiously. . . . We should be able to dovetail our economic system into theirs, to get

machinery from them for use in our manufacturing industries and in our agriculture"; and so on.

"Catch up and outstrip"—this mentality, this insistence upon the fact that the contemporary development of Soviet economic policy is the expression of a pursuit of political power, accounts for a good deal that is peculiar in bolshevik life to-day. Let us begin with the craze for figures. As I have already pointed out when discussing educational developments, the bolsheviks are obsessed by numbers. For them, statistics have become a national fetish. Figures glare at the beholder from the walls of every schoolroom, office, bank, and museum, from the columns of the newspapers, and from hoardings in the streets. Wherever we look we are confronted with tables of millions and of milliards. Were we to believe all that these figures proclaim, the Red economic system would have put that of all other countries into the shade, so that the "catching-up and outstripping" would no longer be a mere aspiration but an accomplished fact. But every student of political economy knows that nothing can so readily be made the vehicle of false statements as statistics. During the years of their dominion, the bolsheviks have become past masters of the art of lying with the aid of statistics. This was manifest at the International Press Exhibition held at Cologne in the year 1928, when the Soviet Russian pavilion was peculiarly impressive in that respect.

## 5. GIGANTOMANIA

A sister of intoxication with figures is gigantomania. The Party has itself coined this word to denote the unparalleled bolshevik love of superlatives. "The first in the world; the greatest in the world; the only one in the world"—the western reader without special experience of the subject will find it difficult to believe how large a part the use of such hyperbole plays in the economic projects and doings of the Soviet State. Gigantomania reached its acme after the inauguration of the Five-Year Plan. No matter whether the centre of interest

was a farm, a power station, a machine trust, or what not, it was always a "giant" enterprise which was being newly planned or reorganised. I am convinced that this passion for the gigantic often led the initiators or reconstructors to close their ears unconsciously to the whispered warnings of economic reason.

In this connexion every one acquainted with contemporary Russia will at once think of Dnieprostroy, the huge electric power station in Ukraine, whose installation has cost hundreds of millions, and which, in other economic conditions, would certainly be a most valuable enterprise. Already in tsarist times, there were far-reaching plans for turning to account the enormous energy of the Dnieper rapids, but all of them were brought to naught by the fact that in the region concerned there is no natural foundation for the establishment of industries which can turn the energies of the proposed works to account. The area is one of thinly populated and arid steppe, unsuited for any extensive development of agriculture. The most plausible economic ground for the construction of Dnieprostroy would be to make the upper waters of the Dnieper navigable. The bolsheviks, however, can give you hundreds of reasons for the establishment of this great power station—excellent theoretical grounds for turning the water power of the area to account. All the same, for years after the engineering works had been in progress, Russian economists and technicians were earnestly discussing in the press what on earth they were going to do with the energy of Dnieprostroy when the works were finished! Thus the Soviet State, so scantily supplied with capital, spent twenty-five million pounds upon an undertaking whose usefulness all the time remained dubious. Even to-day, experts both Russian and non-Russian are convinced that the money spent on Dnieprostroy could have much more usefully been spent elsewhere. Why, then, was Dnieprostroy constructed? Views differ on the point. Some think that the central authorities, who had not done as much as they might have done for Ukraine, wanted to give this dependency a pretty plaything. Others, whose opinion I share, hold that the

temptation to build "the greatest water-power station in the world" was irresistible to the leaders of the Soviet government. Besides, they could quote Lenin to their purpose, since he had declared: "Socialism is Soviet power plus electrification."

Dnieprostroy is, let me repeat, an imposing achievement; and, indeed, Dnieprostroy apart, the bolsheviks have achieved remarkable things in the domain of electrification. Many big power stations are already at work, and many more are in course of construction. All the same, the foreign observer cannot avoid the impression that even in this "show domain" of electrification the work has been less thriftily done than in countries where a free economy prevails. Whenever one has a chance of looking behind the scenes, one notices a marked disproportion between the aims pursued and the means employed, between will and can. For instance, in the Donets basin, the Soviet government has electrified almost all the mines after the American model, instead of modestly contenting itself with the use of compressed air engines as do the German coalmines. The huge expenditure involved has failed to increase production as much as had been expected, whereas the accident rate has leapt up owing to the greater frequency of explosions, for the reason that the Russian technicians, lacking proper instruction, have proved themselves unable to cope with the dangers of electrified mines. Here is another example. In September 1922, work was begun upon the construction of the power station Zages, which was to supply Tiflis with electricity. To supply Tiflis, where there is no manufacturing industry worth mentioning, nor likely to be in the near future. German experts have assured me that a much smaller power station would have sufficed for all the possibilities, and that the petroleum of the neighbouring oil wells of Baku would have been the most suitable source of energy. Instead of this, a huge water-power station has been built, at a cost of sixteen million roubles (though the estimates were for three millions), and in a time double of what had been planned. These miscalculations—which led to a good deal of



furtive mutual recrimination—have been all the more disastrous seeing that the money wasted on Zages might have been far more usefully employed where it was really needed, in the development of the water power of the Rion, to supply western Caucasian industry with electrical energy. Such is the real history of Zages; but when in July 1927 the works were opened, the Russian people and credulous foreigners were ardently assured that they were a marvellous product of Soviet technique and Soviet initiative. In connexion with the opening celebrations, the authorities carefully refrained from stating that the great dam, crowned by a monument to Lenin, had been built by a German firm.

Another of these questionable titans was the first of the great farms in northern Caucasia, conjured out of the ground in the year 1928. According to the announcement of the government, a "storm of iron" was to blow across the Kuban steppe, and was within a year to transform an arid sheep-pasture into boundless cornfields providing bread for the proletarian fatherland. In the summer of 1928, an agricultural expert attached to the Commissariat for Agriculture visited the place, to see how the enterprise was progressing. Accompanied by the local manager he drove for many hours across the steppe in search of the "storm of iron" which he had some difficulty in finding, for the reason that the countryside was still without landmarks, and the alleged storm had raged across it without apparent aim—as storms are wont to do. The "storm of iron" consisted mainly of tractors, many of which had been smashed in course of unloading from the railway because of the lack of the requisite inclined planes to get them safely out of the trucks; others, less damaged than this, were useless because no repairing shops had been built. Finally the expert from headquarters asked the local manager how the expected quantities of grain were to be transported. "In sacks, of course!" The "spets" made a little calculation to show what would be the cost of the sacks, and pointed out that this would be so great as to make the working of the enterprise absolutely uneconomical.

Only after much discussion were the directors of the enterprise brought to realise that the building of silos must be an essential part of grain production on so large a scale.

## 6. ECONOMIC BUREAUCRACY

But apart from these mistakes resulting from bolshevik megalomania, Soviet economics, for all the grandeur of their aim and the energy manifested in its pursuit, are hopelessly amateurish. The Soviet newspapers are full of accounts of extensive losses of money due to ill-conceived plans, prematurely begun and inefficiently executed. Even if we allow for the crazy exaggeration habitual in Soviet Russia—as regards errors no less than as regards achievements—the impression remains that the national property is squandered in a way which would be simply impossible under capitalism. This remark applies not only to the heedlessness with which new enterprises are so often begun, in order to be abandoned at an early stage because found impracticable; for it applies also to distribution, to the whole apparatus of State and cooperative trade. When visiting eastern Siberia in September in 1926, I saw half the fish hauled from the Amur rotting because the salt needed for its pickling had arrived a fortnight too late. Owing to this miscalculation, salmon a yard long were being sold in the Khabarovsk market for 50 copecks apiece. In private enterprise, such a thing would have been almost inconceivable, for a fortnight's delay in the supply of the requisite salt would have ruined the fishermen, the fish dealers, and the salt merchants. Instances could be multiplied without end, but it will suffice to mention that in Ukraine on one occasion when the grain was harvested there was no string to tie the mouths of the sacks; that another time the sacks were wanting; that in Moscow, one spring, 200,000 poods of meat went putrid because the warm weather set in a week earlier than the worthy authorities had expected. And so on.

Doubtless a considerable proportion of these unfortunate

incidents must be ascribed to the carelessness of the lower-grade officialdom, but there remain many which are not thus explicable, and which suffice to inspire doubt as to whether a "purposive economy" can ever supply the needs of the population satisfactorily. At any rate the bolshevik economic system has hitherto proved absolutely incapable of providing the requisite goods at the right place at the right time, and of satisfactory quality. Private capitalism has hitherto shown itself far more sensitive to the needs of the market, and far more trustworthy in the satisfaction of the material needs of the population—and this even in Soviet Russia, where private trade is oppressed and harassed in every possible way. I am not telling the reader anything new! All the world knows that bureaucratic enterprises operate less economically and less successfully than do enterprises whose very existence depends upon their success. No doubt there are compensations to be taken into account. A socialised enterprise cannot "exploit" the labour power of its employees as ruthlessly as a private enterprise can; and for social reasons the former has to make disbursements which are not called for in the case of the latter. This is especially true as regards Soviet Russia, where the short working day and the various welfare institutions are, under bolshevik rule, to be looked upon as indispensable handicaps to productivity. But even in a proletarian community, such a social welfare policy finds its limit when the expenditure involved makes products so costly that for practical purposes the general standard of living is lower. Besides, it is not mainly because so much is done for the workers that Soviet enterprise is uneconomic. Most of the trouble is the direct outcome of bureaucracy.

There was good reason in Lenin's contention that the Russian bureaucracy would have to be eradicated if anything was to be made of Russia. The Russian officialdom, as it developed after the administrative reforms of Peter the Great, thoroughly deserved its evil reputation. The "chínovniks" were lazy, slaves to formality, rude to their inferiors and obsequious to

their superiors. They formed an impassable barrier between the autocrat and his people, estranging the tsar from his subjects, and heartily detested by the latter. But the Russian bureaucracy has not been eradicated by bolshevism. The officials of the old order were, indeed, hunted out of their offices, but the system remained. As soon as the civil wars were over, a new Russian bureaucracy began to grow up, with the speed of mushrooms from a hotbed. Corruption, no doubt, is less rife than of yore, thanks to draconian measures. Members of the Party, who occupy the higher official posts, may, on the average, be regarded as free from the taint of venality. But the other evil qualities of Russian bureaucracy remain: sloth, fussiness, negligence, dread of responsibility, servility to those in high places, arrogance towards underlings.

#### 7. DREAD OF RESPONSIBILITY

In a bureaucratised economy, the dread of responsibility is peculiarly conspicuous, and such, indeed, is one of the most remarkable characteristics of Soviet industrial leadership, which can perhaps best be compared with the princely system in feudal armies. The royal prince was, *pro forma*, the leader of the army; but the actual work was supervised by and the responsibility ultimately rested upon the shoulders of the chief of the general staff. In like manner in Soviet Russia there are Red princes at the head of the various economic offices large and small, at the head of the enterprises and the trusts; but these "princes" are members of the Bolshevik Party with little or no practical knowledge, and the practical work is done by the chief of the general staff, that is to say by engineers and men of business of the old school, who remain in the shadows so long as all is going well, and have to pay with the forfeit of their heads as soon as there is serious trouble. The Shachty trial was a case in kind. But the formula of the Soviet bureaucracy is far more complicated than the above description would imply. Even the "Red directors" are so

afraid of accepting any personal responsibility that they avoid whenever they can putting their names to orders, etc., side by side with the names of the "White directors", the responsible "spetsy". It is because of this shirking of responsibility on the part alike of the Whites and the Reds, that there has arisen a system of interminable sessions and committees. The acceptance of personal responsibility, the bold advocacy of personally resolved and individually conceived measures—these are things which the contemporary Russian dreads as the burned child dreads the fire. Even though the Party member likes to posture in the limelight, he sees to it that as many comrades and "competent authorities" as possible shall endorse his views and actions, and he is not content unless their approval is expressed in black and white by a long list of signatures. The almost hysterical fear of shouldering responsibility has made of the bolshevik economic mechanism a huge labyrinth of institutions which consume a notable proportion of the savings which would otherwise be effected by economic centralisation. Matters are made even worse by the almost universal absence of staying power among the Russians, by the lack of capacity for sticking to one particular job, these being made manifest by frequent changes of occupation and by pluralism.

Out of an abundance of available material, I will select haphazard a few practical instances. In February 1928, the Central Control Commission complained that certain labour disputes had lasted for two years, passing from one authority to another until they had been considered by more than seventy departments before being settled. It was mentioned, further, that such incidents had been of frequent occurrence. In November of the same year the Kharkov factory Tinyakoff complained that within seven months it had been subjected to nine separate inquiries, which had gravely affected the working of the enterprise: the committee of the Federal Manufacturing Bureau had been "working" for three weeks in the factory; the Ukrainian section of the Manufacturing Bureau, three days; the district division of the Commissariat for Labour, ten days; a com-

mission from the Commissariat for Home Trade, a fortnight; a Kharkov commission, three days on each of two occasions; the District Workers' and Peasants' Inspection, a week, and then another fortnight; the central committee of one of the trade unions, a week. It was expressly stated in the complaint that none of these various inspections had been of the smallest use to the factory, serving merely as hindrances. During the year 1927 the factory "Elektrosila" in Leningrad was inspected 97 times; the Aniltrust of that city was inspected 84 times during the same year. When I returned to Russia from furlough in November 1928, I had one of my boxes sent as advance luggage to the Moscow custom-house. I was only able to get it after running from pillar to post for three days and filling in nine documents, some of them very long ones, bearing in all sixteen signatures. It must not be supposed that any special difficulties were being put in my way. This was the ordinary course of business.

Now let me give some examples of the fondness for change of occupation. According to a report which went the rounds of the Soviet press in December 1928, of the administrative officials at work in the Lugansk metallurgical district (Donets basin), 56 per cent had been at their posts for less than a year; of the higher officials, 71 per cent; of the chief engineers, 63 per cent; of the mine managers, 55 per cent; of the leaders of the department for the supply of electrical energy, 80 per cent. It was just the same, said the papers, in other parts of the Russian mining area. No doubt the "love of change" in this field of labour was in part an outcome of the recent Shachty trial, which had alarmed and unsettled all the technical assistants. But even under normal conditions the game of "general post" goes on to an extent incomprehensible to western Europeans.

### 8. SOCIALISTIC COMPETITION

Thanks to the multiplicity of "authorities", there is an insufficiency, even in populous Russia, of persons to fill all the

posts which the bolsheviks have created. I am referring, of course, to the leading posts, which must be held by Party members. The upshot is pluralism. Almost every communist has two or three jobs, which become more numerous the higher his position in the Party. In this way the Party has succeeded in involving its political and economic institutions in an extraordinary tangle; but the system enables the bolsheviks to keep a tight hand upon the reins. So far, so good; but amateurishness and slackness are the inevitable outcome of such a system. Centralised control notwithstanding, the bolshevik economy is extremely complicated, obscure in its workings, and incredibly costly. In fact, the Soviet bureaucratic economy is the most expensive economic system conceivable, which explains why the bookkeeping of almost all the enterprises shows a loss, and why the prices of industrial products are so enormous.

We foreigners in Moscow sometimes asked ourselves what would happen if the barriers that now shut Soviet Russia off from the outer world were to be suddenly thrown down, and the country opened to normal international trade. There was universal agreement as to the answer. A complete collapse of national production! Within a few weeks, the markets would be flooded with foreign goods, and the Russian factories would have to close down. In other words, Soviet industry is not in a position to compete with the capitalist industry of the outer world. It can only continue because the Soviet monopoly of foreign trade prevents foreign competition, and because, since the destruction of private production and private trade, the Russians have had no option but to buy the inferior commodities produced by their own industries at any price the government chooses to ask. The Party is not blind to the danger which an economy thus cut off from competition inevitably runs, being well aware that a sort of atrophy must ensue, like the atrophy in the muscles of a wrestler who has no wrestling partner. To overcome the evil, the Party has devised a substitute for capitalist competition, encouraging what is termed "socialistic competition". The various factories,

agricultural communes, etc., enter into agreements whereby they mutually and solemnly pledge one another to maintain a specified level of production, to keep down expenses, to speed up the work, and so on. These remarkable "competition" agreements are signed by the managers of the undertakings concerned, countersigned by members of the Party nuclei, the works' councils, and the trade-union organisations, and are publicly posted up. Should any such enterprise fail to fulfil its pledges, other participators in the competition will pillory it, metaphorically speaking, by nailing to the gates of the works a blackboard whereon the sins of the backsliding competitor are proclaimed.

As a counterpart to this, there are red placards of recognition for exceptionally good work. There are "competitions for the best village"; competitions for the best Party nucleus, for the best works' council, the best textile factory, and all the rest of it. Enterprises which show badly in these competitions are blacklisted in the newspapers. The fear of open reproof certainly has a stimulating effect in many cases.

• An additional way of promoting vigour in the lower-grade departments of Soviet economic life is by means of the activities of the *udarnye brigady*, the "shock-troops", which consist of members of the Party, especially Young Communists. They act, so to say, as vigilance committees in this field, their business being to intervene whenever there is slacking, or when work is done badly, and the shock-troops are very much feared because they are apt to be rough-handed. A special variety of *udarnye brigady* are those concerned with tax collection, visiting private enterprises and individuals who are in arrears with their taxes, and stripping the offenders almost to the shirt. In Moscow the tax *udarniki* may be said to have become a normal institution, the regularly appointed tax-collector, when he calls on private persons, being almost always accompanied by a pair of these young stalwarts, who make light of protests and nip resistance in the bud. A German resident in Moscow was, literally, stripped of his trousers by



the *udarniki*. As previously recounted, in the spring of 1930, during the campaign against the kulaks, the *udarniki* committed all sorts of outrages in the villages, raiding the unfortunate peasants like robber bands, driving off their cattle, "expropriating" (a euphemism for robbing) the so-called well-to-do peasants, even depriving the poor peasants of their last copecks and turning them out into the street, often by night. The misdeeds committed throughout Russia during these weeks under the banner of the "vanguard of the proletariat", the unwarrantable attacks upon innocents, old men, women, and children, beggar description. Of course when the scandal cries to heaven, and above all when news of what is going on crosses the frontier, the Party leaders pharisaically denounce such violence—but they are responsible for it, since it is by their big words and by their unscrupulous incitements that the Young Communist rowdies are stimulated to excesses.

#### 9. THE MONOPOLY OF FOREIGN COMMERCE

Genuine competition among Soviet enterprises is not allowed, cannot be allowed, inasmuch as a purposive economy becomes impossible when hampered anywhere by a considerable excess or defect of achievement such as necessarily arises under free competition. At public meetings and in the newspapers there are fierce protests whenever one institution or one enterprise seriously competes with another. Socialism is a hothouse plant which cannot thrive in fresh air. That is why the Soviet State has had to surround itself with the impassable barrier of a monopoly on foreign commerce. It is time that foreigners should cease to fancy that, under present auspices, Russia will ever abandon this monopoly. Whoever wishes to trade with Russia must recognise that the other party to the transaction is, so to say, a single individual, namely the entire Russian State, which makes a ruthless and extremely adroit use of its economic autocracy. Economically considered, Russia stands to-day as a compact entity in face of the disparate private

enterprises of other countries. It can play them off one against another, try its fortune on various fronts, and thrust its way in wherever a breach can be made. On the other hand the economic initiative of the surrounding world beats vainly against the smooth walls of the monopoly. Only certain highly specialised foreign undertakings, so highly specialised that they are free from competition, can dictate conditions to the Soviet government. All others are in an inferior position from the outset. Furthermore, foreign merchants can gain no direct touch with the Russian market, whereas Soviet commercial representatives in foreign lands enjoy all the freedom granted to ordinary private traders. Where Russia has no official standing, as in the United States of America for instance, her representatives can gain their ends by operating under assumed names and under the cover of middlemen belonging to the country with which they are dealing. I do not think I exaggerate in saying that the attempts of other countries, with Germany in the forefront, to enter into treaties with Soviet Russia which will stabilise their economic relations with that country have all proved fruitless. The Soviet government continues to use its monopoly powers without scruple.

As an importer, the Russian State is sovereign. Its flawless system of import licences is ten times stronger and safer than the tariffs of our most highly protectionist States. Almost the only calculable element in the Russian imports is that which concerns the spare parts for machines previously imported. In other respects, Russia's plans for import are a bolshevik State secret. The exports from the New Russia are, of course, to some extent dependent upon the conditions of the world market—but less so than the exports of any other country in the world. Why? Because in this matter costs of production are of practically no moment to the Soviet State. Contemporary Russia, as a competitor in the world market, practises dumping on a scale hitherto unprecedented. Moscow flings its wares across the frontier at preposterous prices, selling them at a third, or even at a fifth, of what they have

cost to produce. She exports goods of which there is an extreme dearth at home. In 1929 and 1930, when no Russian townsman could get bread without a bread card and when famine fever was rife, Russia sold considerable quantities of grain abroad at prices below those which prevailed in the world market. In Russia, Russian sewing cotton can only be obtained by privileged persons, trade unionists, and cooperators, in small quantities, on the production of coupons; but in Germany you can buy as much Russian sewing cotton as you like. A box of Russian matches, which in November 1928 representatives of the Soviet Union were selling in Germany for six pfennige, would have cost you at the same date in the streets of Moscow 15 copecks, the equivalent of 33 pfennige. The list of such anomalies could be indefinitely prolonged. In foreign parts, the Soviet government has established a gigantic trading apparatus whose function it is to safeguard its dictatorial policy in matters of foreign trade and to seize all the chances offered by the market. This apparatus culminates in the official Soviet trade delegations, which work independently of the country's foreign missions, but enjoy diplomatic privileges—in Germany, for example, the buildings and the leading officials of the trade delegation have unrestricted extraterritoriality. Since there are round about fifteen hundred persons at work in this delegation at Berlin, it can well be imagined that the bolsheviks have fashioned a very powerful instrument to care for their interests. In addition, Soviet Russia has covered the European States with a network of privately operated economic institutions, such as the mineral oil company Derop in Germany, and the Amporg Trading Corporation in the United States. In reality they are Russian State enterprises. I need merely mention in passing that this widely ramified and many-headed apparatus is even better qualified than the bolshevik diplomatic missions to promote and to advance the affairs of the world revolution "as a side issue". The reports of refugees from the Soviet service throw an interesting light upon this matter. The Party

pursues its political ends with little restraint through the instrumentality of such undertakings, as is proved, to give only one instance, by the fact that Derop will employ hardly any but members of the Communist Party in its German petrol stations.

#### 10. FINANCIAL ARTIFICES

Russian dumping is practised on so large a scale because of the country's chronic hunger for foreign exchanges. This leads us to consider bolshevik financial policy, which can be regarded as the obscurest chapter of Soviet economics. There can be no question that the restabilisation of the Russian currency as early as the year 1922 was a great achievement. Foreign monetary experts are agreed that the chervonets currency established at that time was actually established upon a gold basis. What has happened since then to the Soviet currency can only be deduced from casual symptoms, inasmuch as the finances of Soviet Russia are a State secret, although the Commissariat for Finance and the State Bank publish regular reports. This much is certain, that since 1922 within Russia the chervonets has lost at least two-thirds of its purchasing power, and that on the foreign money market it is regarded as being worth at most one-fifth of its nominal value. The Soviet government has itself discredited the chervonets internationally by strictly prohibiting the import and the export of chervontoy. Foreign experts are therefore convinced that the State Bank can no longer hold the reserve and securities economically requisite for the maintenance of its currency. The chervonets is to-day current only within the Russian frontier, and even there it fulfils its function as medium of exchange very imperfectly, because the peasantry distrust it and will only accept it in payment on compulsion. The chervonets still has a compulsory value of ten roubles, being rather more than a pound sterling (before the collapse of the pound sterling in the autumn of 1931); but in the calculations of the State Bank it has a secret value, which in the beginning

of 1929 was about half the nominal value. During the year 1930 a number of persons were executed for clipping silver coins.

It is difficult to institute an effective comparison between the Russian budget with its enormous figures and the budget of any foreign land, because in Russia the budget takes into account vast quantities of production and trade which in foreign lands belong to the system of private capitalism. The Commissariat for Finance in Moscow, with its sister authorities, the State Planning Commission and the Supreme Economic Council—a veritable colossus—holding as it does the dictatorship of credit, terrorises the life of the country as effectively as does the Cheka. In the expenditure side of the budget, an overwhelming part is played by the cost of maintaining State industry, and, of late, the cost of the socialisation of agriculture. Very large, too, is the expenditure for educational purposes; whereas the expenditure upon social welfare is low in comparison with that in the German budget. As regards revenue, indirect taxes and dues play a much greater part than in capitalist countries, seeing that in the comparative absence of private capital there are no lucrative possibilities for direct taxation. A black spot in the Soviet federal budget is the revenue from the vodka monopoly, which in the budget proposals for 1928-1929 amounted to 866·5 millions of roubles in a total budget of 7,731·5 millions, this signifying that the "proletarian" State was to draw no less than 11 per cent of its total revenue from the sale of "stupefying" spirit—an eloquent example of the difference between bolshevik propaganda phraseology and bolshevik governmental policy.

Loans play a very large part on the revenue side of the Russian budget. How cumbrously the bolshevik financial apparatus does its work may be inferred from the high cost of raising loans. For example, the State spent 14 per cent in collecting the first premium loan of 1927, and 13 per cent in collecting the agricultural loan of 1928. Like the Germans in war-time, the bolsheviks make a vigorous appeal to national

sentiment (proletarian here) in their propaganda on behalf of State loans. Each loan is given a high-flown name to emphasise its public utility and to appeal to socialist sentiment. So weary of propaganda, however, is Soviet Russia, that these devices would hardly bring a copeck out of any one's pocket, and the fine phrases are mainly used for decorative purposes. In actual fact the Soviet loans are all compulsory loans. In the country districts, full subscription is ensured by assigning a definite amount of the loan to each village and leaving it to the village soviet to extract the cash from the reluctant. In many cases, as previously explained, the "subscription" is only brought about by the use of brute force. In the towns rather more refined means are utilised to make people "subscribe" to the loans. Works meetings and trade-union meetings decide "collectively" that every worker shall subscribe so much per month, the amount being deducted from his wages on pay-days. Owing to the general dread of expressing any dissent, such resolutions are always carried unanimously. Since the peasants are now so poor that even the utmost pressure can extort very little from them, the burden of the various loans raised every year is borne almost exclusively by the urban proletariat. For example, of the second industrialisation loan of the year 1928, the R.S.F.S.R. was to provide 290 millions of roubles, the members of the trade unions subscribing 170 millions, the unorganised workers of the towns, 70 to 75 millions, and the peasants 50 to 55 millions. However, when the loan was actually raised, whereas 235 millions were extracted from the organised workers and employees, the other townsmen produced only 15 millions, and the peasants only 20 millions. Notwithstanding the high rate of interest and the scattering of prizes in connexion with these lottery loans, the "proletariat which is establishing socialism" shows no affection for them. Since it is unable to defend itself against the demand for "subscriptions", it does the next best thing—the workers sell their holdings for cash as soon as they possibly can! Of course, such actions are far from suiting the government,

which does everything in its power to prevent the return of the bonds to the bank. Exhortations against their sale, and appeals to the "proletarian conscience", were of no avail; nor were instructions to the bank and tax offices to delay redemption of the bonds by trickery and persuasion any more effective. Fruitless, likewise, was the attempt to make the industrial enterprises administer collectively the loans which had been "collectively" subscribed, thus safeguarding the government against the "arbitrary will" of the individual subscriber. Consequently in March 1930 the authorities decided to go to the extreme length in this field. The Central Committee for the Promotion of State Credit and the State Bank System gave instructions to its branches that they were only to permit the sale or loan of bonds in exceptional circumstances, such as unemployment, prolonged illness, loss of property by fire, and so on. The would-be seller of bonds was to substantiate the "exceptional circumstances" by a certificate from his employers. Thereby the Soviet loans, which deprive the urban workers on the average of at least one month's wages every year and take from impoverished schoolteachers in the countryside as much as 25 per cent of their total income, have definitively acquired the characteristics of an exorbitant tax. This is in the natural order of things. The less the Soviet State is able to extract from its decaying agriculture, the heavier the burden it must impose upon the town proletarians in order to obtain funds for its preposterous schemes of industrialisation.

## II. THE PLAN NO LONGER EXISTS

The enormous figures announced in the Five-Year Plan were greeted with incredulous head-shaking both in Russia and abroad. I must admit that I myself never believed that the Plan was meant to be taken seriously, or that it was practicable. My reasons for this opinion were as follows. First of all I failed to take into account that the colossal figures of the Plan were not comparable with the economic statistics of the capitalist

world, inasmuch as the Plan dealt with the whole economic life of a huge country and a vast population. Without realising it, one involuntarily compared the Plan with the national budgets of other lands, where the figures relate to no more than a small fraction of the national economy. Secondly, we failed to realise that the paper currency of Russia would be doubled already during the second year of the Plan, and that this would alter the whole basis of the calculation. There can be no question that the rouble on October 1, 1928, as spoken of in the Plan, would be something very different from a rouble on October 1, 1931. Thirdly, it was impossible to foresee that, under the working of the Plan, the economic structure of Russia would be so extensively transformed as has actually been the case. With all reservations made, the Plan was originally conceived—on the whole—in accordance with the principles of a free market. In the autumn of 1928, neither the prime necessities of life nor any other commodities were being rationed; and any one who, as an individual, owned commodities, could engage in private trade with them, which was a matter of immense importance as regards the disposal of agricultural produce. To-day all articles in ordinary use are rationed, being either supplied only in return for coupons, or else, if sold "freely", sold at such enormous prices that 99 per cent of the population cannot possibly buy them. Furthermore we have to remember that the Soviet government is continually modifying the Plan alike in its general scope and in respect of details.

In these circumstances the question whether the Five-Year Plan can or cannot be carried out has become unmeaning, inasmuch as the original Five-Year Plan no longer exists. The authorities in Moscow declare that the Plan was carried into effect during the first year. They also maintain that the figures of the second year (into which a fifth quarter of a year has been insinuated) have been realised. To-day Stalin informs us that the "decisive" or third year, which closed on December 31st, has worked according to programme to the



extent of approximately 80 per cent. I shall not venture to say that this contention is justifiable or unjustifiable. We are only groping in the dark, for fluctuations in the standard of value and the kaleidoscopic changes in the figures of the Plan make it absolutely impossible to test the matter effectively. If on December 31, 1932, seeing that the cry now is "The Five-Year Plan in Four Years", the government should announce that the Plan has been successfully carried out, we can only accept this statement by an act of faith. Western Europe will always be led astray if it takes bolshevik utterances as good materialist and rationalist coin, even in economic matters. The bolsheviks are not rationalists, but persons buoyed up by the most sanguine hopes. The New Russia is not "purposively" marching straight forward towards a clearly conceived economic goal. The New Russia is waging war, is carrying on a fierce economic campaign, characterised by sudden offensives, retreats, changes of front, the use of shock-troops, and typical war propaganda on the grand scale. Fascinated by the sight of titanic factories and power-stations, springing up as if by magic, we forget to ask if these huge toys will really supply Russians and foreigners with the commodities they are designed to produce. While the dreamers in the Kremlin are drafting a new Five-Year Plan, are ready to begin a new campaign, Europe is hypnotised by the figures of the first Five-Year Plan, which is supposed to have constituted the Magna Charta of the Soviet Union since October 1, 1928—although amid the clamour and turmoil of Russian reality, the Plan has long since mouldered into dust.

As I have been insisting since 1925, economic happenings in Soviet Russia must be judged by a purely utilitarian standard. On January 1, 1933, we shall have to call to mind what the Soviet leaders prophesied four years earlier as the outcome of the Plan. We shall have to ask ourselves whether, by this date, Russia has really become independent of foreign imports, whether the Russian workers have really attained a higher standard of life than those of the western world, whether the

days of hunger are really over. Since the Five-Year Plan is to be realised in four years, a very little time separates us from the opening of the promised Golden Age of bolshevism. Even if, less sanguine than the Kremlin, we wait for the close of the fifth year of the original plan, there is not much time in which to bridge the chasm between the Russian present and the imagined Russian future. Meanwhile, poverty and distress are unquestionably as severe as during the days of the civil war, and the standard of life is falling instead of rising.

## CHAPTER TWENTY-ONE

### WAGES AND UNEMPLOYMENT

#### 1. MATERIAL CONDITION OF THE WORKERS

ACCORDING to Soviet official data, the average wages of the workers of Moscow during the summer of 1930 were 75 roubles a month (equivalent, at the old sterling standard, to about 35 shillings a week). For comparison with German conditions I will put the wage at 150 marks per month. On the face of it this is much less than the average wage of German industrial workers. But the comparison becomes considerably more unfavourable to the workers of Soviet Russia when we take into account that at this date the German index figures for the minimum requirements of a worker specified 150 marks, whereas the elementary needs of a Soviet worker could only be satisfied by an expenditure of more than 200 marks. We must also remember that the Soviet index figures are touched up in various ways, and for a satisfactory comparison with German conditions should be 300 marks a month instead of only 200. This means that the Soviet urban worker is only half as well off as his German brother. In earlier years the proletarians of Soviet Russia, when they complained of the miseries of their lot, were informed that their wages would steadily increase, and that their extant poverty would be but temporary. In actual fact, the nominal wage increased 79 per cent during the years from 1924 to 1929. But in "Pravda", under date June 14, 1930, the veil was lifted for a moment. An opposition communist bluntly declared that real wages had not risen since 1928, and in 1930 had actually fallen. Every one will confirm this who has lived in Russia during recent years, for the price of the necessaries of life has risen greatly, and there has been no proportional increase in nominal wages. According to official figures, the average nominal wage

on October 1, 1928, was approximately 67 roubles, and on June 1, 1930, approximately 80 roubles, whereas during the same period prices doubled. But the official figures fail to give an accurate idea of the real income of the broad masses of the Russian workers. The unknown element in the matter is the term "average wage". I have never been able to discover how this "average wage" is calculated, or to which group of workers and employees it applies. The lack of precise information is all the more deplorable seeing that wages are much more steeply graded in Russia than in capitalist countries. In the same enterprise, a highly skilled worker will often be paid four or five times as much as an unskilled labourer. Starvation wages of less than 30 roubles a month (with a purchasing power of about £1 sterling) are by no means uncommon, while skilled workers in the same factory may be paid as much as 250 or 300 roubles, to say nothing of the salaries of the university-trained spetsy, which are likewise steeply graded, and, in the case of the most favoured, reach 1,000 roubles. Although in the early days bolshevik propaganda had so much to say about equalisation of wages, there is nothing of the kind in contemporary Soviet practice. On the contrary, there is in the New Russia a working-class aristocracy far more highly developed than in modern Germany. Unquestionably, too, the proportion of workers who receive less than a "subsistence wage" is very large. The real condition of the Russian workers as regards wages and labour conditions can best be learned from those German communists who have visited Russia in the hope of finding a happier life in the proletarian paradise. The German consulates in Russia are kept busy in helping these unfortunates, whose one wish is to get back as speedily as possible to their "bourgeois" homeland. To avoid misapprehension, let me warn the reader against confusing these genuine working-class refugees with the German communist emissaries and the members of the labour delegations, about whom I wrote in an early part of my book.

## 2. THE UNEMPLOYED

I have not much space in which to describe the condition of the unemployed in Russia. According to official data, in June 1930 they numbered about 1,200,000; but these figures are misleading, for the registration of the unemployed is extremely inefficient except in the large towns and in the great centres of industry, and even there only a fraction of those really out of work find a place in the statistics. For instance, seasonal workers temporarily unemployed and "sometimers" (those who used to belong to the possessing classes) are ignored by the registration bureaus; while unorganised workers must have been in a job at least three years before the loss of it is recognised as unemployment, and employees at least two years. The regulations as to the assistance given to the registered unemployed, the term for which unemployed benefit is paid, and the supplement for additional members of the family, resemble those which obtain in Germany. But the percentage of the registered unemployed who are actually given relief is much smaller in Russia than in Germany. For instance, on October 1, 1928, of 1,344,000 registered unemployed, only 65,000 were receiving unemployment benefit—less than half of the total. Still more unfavourable was the outlook for the unemployed in "proletarian" Russia and in "bourgeois" Germany respectively as regards the amount of unemployment benefit. After the reform of the unemployment insurance system in the year 1925, the amount paid to the German unemployed ranged between 24 and 90 marks per month, whereas the bolshevik unemployment benefit ranged between 7 and 27 roubles, which, as regards purchasing power, was equivalent to a range from 5 to 20 marks. The treatment of the unemployed, which is one of the most important tasks of social policy, is a theme about which bolshevik propagandists in foreign lands do not like to talk—in marked contrast with their loquacity as regards the other glories of Soviet Russia.

## 3. RED TRADE UNIONS

But are there no trade unions in Soviet Russia to see to it that the government shall provide for the wellbeing of the workers? Certainly there are trade unions in Russia, gigantic trade unions, trade unions which have an international of their own, and for a decade have sung their own praises in contrast with the "social traitors" of the Amsterdam International. Membership of the Red trade unions is practically compulsory for all Russian industrial workers, seeing that without a trade-union card the worker cannot be registered at the labour exchange, has no right to a tenement, and cannot get a bread card. Nevertheless, these bolshevik trade unions, which in Berlin and Paris, in New York and Shanghai, make such a parade of virile proletarianism, are in the Russian homeland more tame and more timorous than can easily be imagined. In a word, the bolshevik trade unions are nothing more than a colour wash to ornament the front of the proletarian State, leading in the Red economic field a shadow life like that led by the soviets in the Red political system.

What else can be expected? Is not the so-called proletarian commonwealth simultaneously employer and employed? Does not this commonwealth base itself upon the supposition that the only aim of its existence is the welfare of the broad masses? Who, then, in Russia, can represent collective interests against whom? The communist Ivanoff, general manager of the State Trust Max Hölz against Comrade Pavloff, chairman of the Trust trade union? The works' manager, the chairman of the works' Party nucleus, the head of the workers' council, and the secretary of the trade-union branch in the same undertaking—are they not all expressions of the same will, are they not all marching towards the same goal, are they not all representatives of the only interest that counts—the interest of the ruling Party? It cannot be otherwise, and thus it is. Let us scrutinise the Russian trade unionist a little more closely. On May 1, 1928, in the lowest grade of trade-union

committees, the Party members formed 56·4 per cent of the total membership; and of the secretaries of these lower-grade committees (paid trade-union officials) 81·6 per cent were Party members. Passing upwards to the next grade of the trade-union bureaucracy, we find the respective figures to be 65 and 91·6 per cent. In the central committees, the Party members number 78 per cent; in the executives of these committees, 93·8 per cent; while the chairmen are exclusively Party members. Finally, in the General Council of the Trade Unions, the supreme authority, on January 1, 1927, the bolsheviks formed 99·3 per cent of the membership. At the beginning of 1928, by express command of the Party, the percentage was reduced to 95·2, this being done—just as in the case of the supreme Soviet authority—simply in order to touch up the visage of democracy.

The practical policy of the Soviet trade unions conforms to their position in the Red commonwealth and to the communist characteristics of their governing bodies. In their public proclamations, they say very little about the natural function of a trade union, which is to represent the material interests of its members, but they talk much about the "furtherance of socialism", about working-class organisations as "instruments of the proletarian dictatorship" and as formed "to educate the working masses". It is stated to be the primary duty of the trade unions to maintain discipline among the workers, and to make these understand that their material desires "must be brought into harmony with existing circumstances, with the difficult economic conditions of the period of industrial reconstruction". In a word, it is the business of the Red trade unions in the proletarian commonwealth to tell their members all the disagreeable truths which in other lands the employers are wont to inculcate into the employed. The representation of working-class interests in the "primitive" sense, after the manner of the trade unions in capitalist countries, is utterly unthinkable in Russia. Extremely characteristic is the fact that the old trade-union leaders, with Tomsky

in the forefront of them, have during the last year and a half been deposed, and have been replaced by pliable tools of the Party—the reason being that the old leaders continued to insist upon the need for improving the material conditions of the workers.

The western European cannot but feel that the essential notion of trade union organisations is being reduced to absurdity when he learns that the occurrence of a strike in Soviet Russia is a matter for which the trade-union leaders concerned are accounted guilty. They have indeed only committed a sin of omission, for no trade-union governing body in contemporary Russia would dream of calling a strike; but when an unauthorised strike occurs, the leaders are to blame for having failed to “enlighten” the workers and to make them more reasonable! The reader will remember that during the Trotsky dispute the Party leaders stigmatised the causing of strikes in Soviet enterprises as a grave offence. The Red State is as dogmatical and pharisaical in labour questions as in political; it is the chartered proletarian State, and as such is (as a matter of principle) infallible in its position of employer.

It would be of little avail, to-day, to say much about the concessions policy of the bolsheviks, since for practical purposes the concessions have now been liquidated. Enough to mention in passing that it is in connexion with these expiring concessions that the Russian trade unions find their only genuine function. In the foreign concessions, and also in such private enterprises as remain in Russian hands, trade unionists can do all that is forbidden them elsewhere. They can, nay they must, demand the highest possible wages, must protest against dismissal, must “down tools” whenever the fancy takes them. It is really ludicrous to note how the bolshevik trade-union bureaucrats, whose general behaviour is a sort of pitiful egg-dance to justify their titles, begin to speak in tones of thunderous menace as soon as the adversary is not a Red trust or a Red factory, but a German joint-stock company or the Lena Goldfields Limited.





*BOOK SEVEN*

THE MISSION OF BOLSHEVISM



## CHAPTER TWENTY-TWO

### PRESENT CONDITION OF RUSSIA

#### I. A RUSSIAN PROBLEM

THE sum total of the motley pictures and variegated studies which comprise the pages of this book is not simply Soviet Russia. Involuntarily the reader will have projected them into the framework of his familiar thoughts, the framework of the Europe he knows so well, and will thus have applied to them a false standard. Primarily the bolshevik State is, after all, Russia, this meaning a living organism with its own laws of life, its own evolutionary course, its own distinctively individual countenance. Being thus individual, it must be considered in and by itself, and not merely in the light of a comparison with some other organism. We Germans, for instance, refuse to contemplate our fatherland as it impresses an American or a Frenchman. With much more right, then, can Russia, standing so far aloof from western European culture, demand consideration as a thing in itself, as a product of peculiar historical, territorial, and political conditions. We must avoid being led astray by the bitter feelings of the refugees, who express their unhappiness in the phrase: "Russia has been, and Russia will be once more!" No, Russia now exists, however fiercely not only the Whites, but also the Reds who are at present the rulers of the country, may insist that the bolshevik realm is something utterly distinct from Russia. Napoleonic France in 1811, with the boundaries and the spiritual configuration it then possessed, was, no doubt, as different from the France of 1789 as the Russia of Stalin is different from the Russia of Nicholas II. Nevertheless the revolutionary European State ruled by Napoleon was still France, just as the Stalinist State of the world revolution is Russia.

In point of political form, Soviet Russia is a despotism, even as the Russia of the Romanoffs was a despotism. Bolshe-

vism has actually intensified the characteristics of Russia as a police State. The word "freedom" signifies no more in Russia to-day than it did of old. The democratic Soviet system remains nothing but window-dressing. The Russian people has no effective influence upon the conduct of its own life. Russia as a land of wealthy princes, manufacturers, and merchants no longer exists; but, nonetheless, the aggregate national income is inferior to what it was in 1914.

## 2. BOLSHEVISM AS TEACHER

Russia has not grown happier, but it has advanced. The bolshevik deluge has in a decade effected educational work for which in quiet times generations might have been needed. Although during this epoch Russia has passed through a phase of almost incredible nervous exhaustion, the country has been shaken out of the old rut, and as year succeeds year the bolsheviks are bringing about more extensive changes. The Party's policy in the matter of the nationalities has awakened powerful instincts that were semi-dormant. The social and political endeavours of the regime, the multitude of measures to promote hygiene, to develop health resorts, to ensure motherhood protection and the protection of children, have aroused needs and wishes which, having once come into being, will persist. Moreover, the strongest of all the impulses that have been at work, the permeation of the whole of the national life with bolshevik propaganda, has activated the contemporary Russian politically and made him keen of hearing. As far as human foresight goes, it seems impossible that in the long run either police terrorism or hermetical seclusion from the outer world will be able to prevent the masses of the Russian people from forming political judgments of their own.

## 3. YOUNG RUSSIA

This is true above all of the coming generation. To an increasing extent to-day the young people of the towns are the

sturdiest props of the extant regime, since bolshevism has been inculcated into them in their cradles. But to-morrow, like the fascist youth of Italy, they will begin to regulate their own lives and to organise the State in accordance with their own ideas. The feelings of the young Russians of the coming time will not be the feelings of the founders of bolshevism. The Russians of to-morrow will not hate capitalists, the clergy, and the British diehards—for one does not hate things with which one has never made acquaintance. They will not, like the old bolsheviks, look upon life under the sign of the katorga, the knout, and conspiracy; what they do and what they leave undone will not, as in the case of members of the Old Guard, be determined almost exclusively by dread memories of the tsarist State. The foreigners who have watched Young Russia in the Red Square on May 1st and November 7th demonstrating against Nicholas, landowners, Austen Chamberlain, the pope of Rome, and cigar-smoking bourgeois, nod their heads sagely, and, when they return to their homes in Berlin, London, or New York, have great things to tell about the revolutionary enthusiasm they have witnessed—but they are simple folk, for every one who knows his A B C ought to be aware that in these matters Young Russia, which will soon be the controlling force in the country, is merely parroting catchwords which are already obsolete.

The spirit of the bolshevik revolution only remains active within Russia as a confrontation of fancied adversaries. The class "enemy", be he kulak, village pope, sabotaging engineer, or White Guardist, is a spectre, a fetish, rigged out in order to distract public attention from the failures and defects of the bolshevik commonwealth, to justify the suppression of freedom, and to provide a target for the wrath of the disappointed. The same function is fulfilled by unceasing talk about the imminent danger of an armed attack on Soviet Russia, the foreign world being represented as peopled by ravening wolves. It is difficult for the western European to realise what sort of a picture of the world at large the inhabitants of Soviet

Russia contemplate in their mind's eye to-day. For them all the countries outside their own fatherland form one vast penitentiary, whereas Red Russia is the centre of world happenings and world interests. When, travelling by rail, I was reading foreign newspapers, my youthful Russian fellow-travellers would almost always ask me: "What are those journals writing about the Soviet Union?" As truth constrained, my usual answer was that none of the papers contained more than a line or two about Soviet Russia. Promptly came the rejoinder: "But what on earth do they write about, then?" I find it impossible to believe that a population of one hundred and sixty millions can be permanently shut away from the light in this way. But if ever a breath of fresh air penetrates the bolshevik forcing-house, I have no doubt that the scintillating soap-bubbles of the contemporary artificial revolutionism will speedily burst. They will burst because, in truth, the bolsheviks have awakened Russia.

#### 4. A COUNTRY WITH A GREAT FUTURE

There is good reason to expect for Russia in Europe and for Russia in Asia an economic expansion exceeding even that of the United States during the last hundred years. Russia contains or can produce all the treasures of the earth, from cotton to gold, from cedar groves to mineral oil, from the fisheries of the north to the tea-plantations of the south. No power in the world will be able to hinder the industrialisation of Russia, which even before the war was proceeding at an American tempo. Any endeavour on the part of western countries to check this development would not only be foolish, but from a purely selfish outlook mistaken, seeing that industrialised States are always better markets for industrial commodities than are countries so backward in development as to be still mainly agricultural. In proof of this we Germans can point to the fact that, before the war, highly industrialised Britain was Germany's best customer. It is true that the bolsheviks

are making frantic efforts to industrialise Russia at an unheard of speed, because they want to make themselves independent of the foreign world, and also because they want to multiply the number of the industrial workers as the indispensable supporters of their own power. But those who honestly think that bolshevism is a serious menace to Europe should ask themselves whether a passive resistance on the part of Europe can possibly hinder the natural and inevitable process of the industrialisation of Russia.

#### 5. BOLSHEVIK LABOUR POLICY

A non-Russian coined the phrase: "The bolsheviks are making a heroic attempt to attain their ends by starving themselves". We may accept this epigram with a trifling modification. The bolsheviks are attempting to attain their ends by starving the Russian populace. The average Russian is having a very bad time of it, a worse time than he had in the days of the tsars. The Russian industrial workers, who do not yet form 10 per cent of the Russian people, are perhaps a trifle better off materially than of yore, for the index figures may be deceptive. Besides, the younger Russian workers are inspired by the conviction that they are masters of the State. But the older and more experienced Russian workers, those who a few years back were still sympathetic to or at any rate tolerant of the bolshevik revolution, have for the most part been disillusioned, and have grown bitter. Every German fitter and engineer who lives among the Russian workers to-day speaks of this change of sentiment. Still, we must not overestimate its importance. If the Party should succeed in bringing about a considerable rise in the standard of life (which has been steadily falling for the last three years), it would be able to count upon regaining the good will of the broad masses of the urban population—to some extent at least. That the Party honestly desires their welfare cannot be disputed. Whatever it may say to the contrary, it really counteracts its own interests as employer by the introduction of the seven-hour day, and



similar measures, designed for the benefit of the industrial workers, and in the hope of making them more contented. Furthermore the bolsheviks have inaugurated a social welfare policy, out of a vacuum as it were. On the other hand, the Soviet regime has repudiated a number of principles which belong to the alpha and the omega of Marxism. For instance, time rates of wages have almost everywhere been replaced by piecework rates and premium systems, leading oftentimes to an abominable exploitation of labour power. Red competition, as previously described, likewise bears the stamp of exploitation. In what, once more, does bolshevik rationalisation differ from the capitalist rationalisation of the West, seeing that it has involved the ruthless dismissal of from 25 to 30 per cent of the working staffs, especially in the clerical departments? Surely capitalist principles, principles "hostile to the workers", are in operation when in connexion with every new enterprise it is expressly declared that production is expected to rise much faster than the wages bill!

We must not forget, however, that the Soviet worker is a Russian, this meaning that he is much less exacting than a western European worker, and that he is willing to suffer privation rather than to exert himself strenuously in order to increase his income. It is a "moral" alleviation of the Russian industrial worker's lot that he is, on the average, a trifle better off than most of his fellow-countrymen.

But he, too, is unable to escape the general depression of the standard of life which has, in large measure, been the outcome of the Five-Year Plan. There can be no doubt that, as a result of the increasing lack of commodities, his position has been considerably worsened during the last two years. That has been the motive force behind the "Right deviation" which is perhaps to-day even more marked than it was at the close of 1928 when for the first time it was officially suppressed. The leaven of discontent is at work. It is not true that the Russian industrial workers are satisfied with the bolshevik regime, although at countless meetings organised by the Party reso-

lutions of confidence are carried "unanimously" in the usual style.

"The masses are not convinced", said Lenin frankly in December 1920, adding, "the chief obstacle in our way is poverty."<sup>1</sup> That was immediately before the introduction of the New Economic Policy. Ten years later, Lenin, were he still alive, would say the same thing. "The masses are not convinced; the chief obstacle in our way is poverty." A decade of Soviet reconstruction has failed to bring about the slightest improvement in the condition of the masses. But there is a difference between 1920 and 1930. In 1920 the Russian workers could still cherish illusions. In 1930, after thirteen years of bolshevik experiments, their illusions have faded—the illusions even of these Russian workers who are so much more patient, so much more long-suffering, than the workers of the West. How differently would European workers, German workers above all, react to such interminable material privations and to such a lack of political freedom! I am absolutely convinced that ninety-nine out of a hundred European workers who should be suddenly transferred into the living and working conditions of Soviet Russia would find these absolutely intolerable, would find them infinitely worse than the conditions prevailing in their homeland, as indeed has been the experience of the few European workers who (mostly for political reasons) have ventured to emigrate to Russia. In April 1930, a group of such emigrants, workers in the building trade who were communists or communistically inclined, removed from Hamburg to the Soviet paradise, and within a few weeks were clamouring for the help of the "bourgeois" authorities of the German realm because they felt that they had been abominably deceived by their bolshevik employers. In my journeys hither and thither through Soviet Russia, I came across many such emigrants (some of them as far away as Turkestan) who were profoundly disillusioned, estranged from the Party, but had to accept their pitiful lot because, having been political offenders,

<sup>1</sup> Lenin's Works, Second Edition, vol. XXVI, Moscow, 1930.

they were unable to return to Germany. I hope that the amnesty proclaimed in July 1930 will enable these unfortunates to make their way back to the "bourgeois" fatherland.

## 6. THE NEW SERFDOM

Beyond question the most striking incident in the domain of bolshevik labour policy was the suspension of unemployment benefit during the winter of 1930-1931, and the so-called mobilisation of the whole strength of the workers. This measure, which objectively considered was extremely reactionary, was inaugurated by the authorities in the attempt to put an end to the migration of the workers—temperamental, as already said, among the Russians, and greatly intensified of late by their increasing distress. It need hardly be said that the vast army of unemployed, which in the summer of 1930 still exceeded a million in number, could not, all in a moment, be absorbed into industry, however furiously this was being developed. Still, it is true that Soviet industry is now suffering from a lack of labour power.<sup>1</sup> But an absolute shortage exists only as concerns skilled labour, which the government has hitherto lamentably failed to train in sufficient quantities. Of unskilled workers there is an abundance in Russia, but so long as unemployment benefit was paid there was always a considerable proportion of workers on tramp in search of better conditions of life and labour than were provided at most of the works carried on under the Five-Year Plan. The recruiting or "mobilisation" of the industrial workers at large was a logical sequel of the abolition of unemployment benefit. The Russian worker no longer has the right to move from place to place. He cannot change his residence without a special permit from the authorities. Offers of work may no longer be refused. At any moment the workers can be sent whithersoever those in high places please to send them. "Mobilisation" is

<sup>1</sup> See the admirable report of H. R. Knickerbocker, who visited the chief industrial centres of the Five-Year Plan in the autumn of 1930.

a very euphemistic term for this latest bolshevik system. How does the Soviet worker of to-day differ, in respect of personal freedom, from the Russian of former times, who could at any moment be recalled to his native village by the "mir"? Only in this respect, that the "mir" was restricted in its power over its members, whereas Soviet enterprise decides the lot of its workers solely in accordance with "economic necessity". In the fourteenth year of the bolshevik regime, the Russian industrial worker has become a serf of the factory or workshop.

### 7. THE RUSSIA OF TO-MORROW

Surprising as this latest development may seem, it is really in the line of orthodox socialism. The history of Soviet economy is a succession of manifest proofs that a genuinely purposive economy is impossible so long as, within the multiform structure of the national economy, the individual will is allowed to remain operative. Real socialism is only conceivable in a community developed along the lines and stamped with the characteristics of an army. It is not by chance that bolshevik phraseology bristles with military terms, such as commanding points, recruiting, mobilisation, vanguard, outpost, front, light cavalry (the Young Communists), shock-troops, etc. I feel assured that the conscripting of the Russian workers will not be the last word in the militarisation of the populace of the Soviet Union. Even as I write, news comes to hand from Moscow that disciplinary powers of a military kind are being given to the factory managements. Primitive agricultural communism is economically conceivable as being worked on humane and reasonable lines. But in these days of advanced technique, a huge socialist State system resembles an extremely complicated machine which cannot work satisfactorily if the smallest cog-wheel or lever is allowed to follow its own inclinations.

One need not be a prophet, one need merely be a realist, to perceive that the Soviet State as pioneer of socialism must

inevitably be shipwrecked on the hard fact that it will be found impossible to transform a population of 160 million persons into a rigidly disciplined army—as the iron law of socialism demands, all attempts at a contrary interpretation notwithstanding. It is the doom of Stalin and his friends that they dare not call a halt in the march which is inexorably leading them into the socialist blind-alley—they dare not for petty reasons of political prestige, for dread of the radical phrase-making of the Trotskyists, and for fear of the Right opposition of Rykoff, Tomskey, and Zyrtssoff, who were quick to recognise the danger and to warn them against it.

Of course the alternative to socialism cannot be attractive to any bolshevik, for it signifies the renouncement of attempts at an all-embracing purposive economy, and the throwing open of the doors to individualist endeavour—signifies, therefore, in the end, a return to capitalism. Let us not deceive ourselves. As soon as the Soviet State relinquishes the attempt to control all the branches of national production and to subject consumption likewise to its supreme authority, it will be repudiating its claim to be “the State which is establishing socialism”. Therewith it will automatically enter the circle of those modern States which regard it as their task, not to monopolise the national economy, but to supervise and regulate it. The political alternative to socialism is the promotion of social welfare, the control of the morbid outgrowths of capitalism and the protection of those who are economically weaker. These are not tasks which can appeal to a bolshevik fanatic, being tasks to which a bolshevik regime can only be expected to devote itself when prepared to admit frankly that the attempt to establish socialism has been a failure. No one who has grasped the nature of the compulsion that prevails universally throughout the Soviet State, can doubt that the renunciation of economic absolutism must bring a renunciation of governmental and spiritual absolutism in its train.

The Russia of to-morrow will not be the State either of Lenin or of Stalin, but will nevertheless retain a good deal

of that which the bolshevik era has created. It will retain, for instance, the soviet system, which is so well suited to Russian conditions that even Grand Duke Cyril, the claimant to the Romanoff throne, once adopted it; and it is, moreover, akin to western European ideas of an occupational representative system and to the corporation-State of fascist Italy. It will be in the natural course of evolution that many of the socialist institutions of bolshevism will persist and be further developed. Nor can we suppose that the vast State enterprises which have grown up and are still growing in Russia will all be transformed into individualist concerns, for no doubt the new Russia will have a large number of State monopolies. But we should lose our way in the mist if we were to attempt to give more than vague intimations of future possibilities. The form assumed by the Russia of the future will mainly depend upon how long the curve of bolshevik energy continues to rise; upon whether a palace revolution in the Kremlin leads to the establishment of a transitional regime of moderates, or whether this eastern land which has suffered so much in the past will have to traverse the maelstrom of renewed forcible revolutions—a dreadful thought, in view of the vast mass of reciprocal hatred now being stored up. To conclude, the destiny of bolshevism and of Soviet Russia will be largely influenced by the growth of their relationship to the non-Russian world and by the course of development which the outer world itself pursues.

## CHAPTER TWENTY-THREE

### THEY AND WE

#### I. A EUROPEAN PROBLEM

IF at the beginning of the last chapter I stressed the demand that the Soviet State should be primarily regarded as a specifically Russian structure and should be contemplated within the framework of Russian development, this was not because I had any wish to minimise the importance of bolshevism as an international phenomenon. To revive the comparison already made, Napoleon's realm was primarily French, but its existence became a great European problem. For Europe and for the world at large, Soviet Russia is something more than a State with which other States enter into certain economic and political relationships, inasmuch as the U.S.S.R. claims to be a model for all the States of the world, expressly declares at the close of the first section of its constitution that its establishment is "a new decisive step along the path of the union of the workers of all countries in a World Socialist Soviet Republic", and it invites all newly formed socialist soviet republics to join the Soviet Union. Bolshevism enunciates a formal claim to world dominion, and strives to attain this by every means at its disposal. I need not waste space here taking a side in the old dispute as to whether Soviet Russia and the Bolshevik Party are coterminous ideas, seeing that throughout the course of this book there has been abundant demonstration of the way in which, in the Soviet State, Party institutions and governmental institutions are interdigitated. Both the Soviet government and the leading group of the Third International (the Comintern) are merely executive instruments of the general secretariat of the Bolshevik Party and of the Political Bureau—substantially, therefore, at the present time, of Stalin. Since neither Moscow nor many foreign

States have wished to dispense altogether with diplomatic and economic relationships, it has been necessary to maintain the fiction of a complete distinction between the Soviet government and the Comintern, for thus only could a plausible though exiguous *modus vivendi* be brought into being. But the reader must never lose sight of the fact that there is something fundamentally insincere about the relations of all other States with the Soviet government. The foreign world signs treaties with Moscow only as a means for getting into contact with the great economic and political complex known as Russia; and the Soviet government is meanwhile impatiently awaiting the hour when the progress of bolshevism abroad will sound the knell of the governments with which it enters into treaty relations. The aggressor in this unceasing though tacit struggle is Moscow. As champion of the world revolution, the Soviet Union is an imperialistic and military power. The desire of Poland, Roumania, and France to take interventionist action against Russia would cease to have any possible foundation if the sapping and mining work of the Comintern came to an end. No non-Russian nation would desire and no non-Russian people would tolerate, an imperialistic war against a peaceful Russia, however bolshevik.

## 2. THE SATELLITES

In the Comintern the bolsheviks have created an international weapon of an entirely new kind and of incomparable quality. The foreign sections of the Comintern, though absolutely subordinate to the Muscovite dictatorship, enjoy in Germany, France, England, etc., all the rights of the political parties that are indigenous to those lands. Thus through the communist members of parliament, who are but the plenipotentiaries of bolshevism, the Bolshevik Party leadership is able to exert a direct influence upon the legislation of foreign States, and can even at times, when communists become members of a foreign cabinet, influence a foreign administration. If the



foreign agents of the Comintern had a trace of independence, they might perhaps be compared with members of parliament belonging to Roman Catholic parties, for these likewise are the representatives of an outlook and a doctrine whose central authority is localised in one particular country. This comparison is, however, invalidated by the fact that bolshevik activities are concerned, not merely with doctrinal questions, but with all spheres of individual, social, and political life; and because the "Red Tsar" in Moscow claims to be, not only arbiter mundi, but also world legislator and world commissioner of police.

Not once during the history of the Third International has it happened that the non-Russian sections of that body, the reputed equals of the Russian section, have had any influence upon the destinies of the latter—unless the approval invariably accorded by the bolshevik parties in other lands to the arbitrary activities of the Moscow leadership towards dissentient members of their own party (for instance, as in the case of the deportation of Trotsky) are to be regarded as coming within that category. But whereas in the Comintern; the Russian section is assumed to be infallible, the secretariat of the Comintern, which sits always in Moscow, is more than frank in its perpetual criticisms of the doings of the non-Russian sections; and, whenever thus criticised, the non-Russian communist parties swing round like automata to march in the line ordered from Moscow. What goes on behind the scenes in the Comintern in the way of carefully planned intrigues against foreign States, and, within foreign States, against the government and particular strata of the population, is only disclosed on rare occasions when something has gone awry, and, in the heat of the combat, the scapegoats are reviled too loudly, or when an initiate deserts to the opposition and there unloads a wallet packed with information. Still, any one who reads the official reports of the sittings of the Comintern can easily form an impression of the precision and brutality with which Moscow leads its foreign sheep and orders them

about. Whenever, during the years since the Third International was founded, any of the communist parties of western Europe have shown the slightest inclination to take independent action, such movements have been ruthlessly suppressed. In Germany, for instance, all members possessed of a vigorous individuality such as Brandler, Maslow, Ruth Fischer, Katz, and Urbahns (to name only a few), have been promptly expelled from the Party as soon as they dared to show that they possessed opinions of their own. Except for Clara Zetkin, "the grandmother of the revolution", who lives in Russia and only comes to Germany from time to time for a star performance in the Reichstag, there is hardly one among the present leaders of the Communist Party of Germany who would have been worthy to stand beside Karl Liebknecht and Rosa Luxemburg. The last illusions as to the character of the communist parties of western Europe must fade from the mind of any one who studies their general behaviour and reads their newspapers, which are slavish imitations of the Russian exemplars. Sometimes this apishness goes so far that articles are quite incomprehensible, being so packed with Russian phrases and typically Russian ideas as to find no associative responses in German, English, or French, as the case may be.

The aim of bolshevik imperialism is known to the whole world. With the aid of its faithful satellites, the Communist Party of Russia is working for the world revolution, this meaning the overthrow of political and economic forms other than those of bolshevism, the destruction of the various Churches, and the establishment of bolshevik Soviet republics after the Russian model. Yet in foreign parts there seems to be very little understanding of the main principles of Red propaganda, for were it otherwise more efficient means of counteraction would be employed. Above all, westerners should grasp the fact that the bolshevik world movement (if such an expression as "world movement" be applicable to a movement that is fundamentally Russian) would shrink and dwindle to become a petty sect if it were cut loose from Moscow.

This would inevitably happen were it only because financial subsidies would be cut off. The sapping and mining carried on throughout the world by the Comintern would be impossible without the funds that come from Red Russia—although part of the money used is now derived from cleverly devised subsidiary undertakings, such as the one conducted by the German communist leader Münzenberg. Furthermore, a removal of the headquarters of the Comintern from Moscow to the capital of some other country, in conjunction with the severance of the ties with the Russian bolshevik centre, would be promptly followed by splits in the movement, for who but the Muscovite chiefs would possess the same power and show the same energy in unifying the international bolshevik movement regardless of the differing needs of the various national sections?

### 3. THE SOVIET UNION AS A SIGNBOARD

But the strongest pillar of the Red world movement is the mere fact that the Russian Soviet State exists. For it is a peculiar fact that, although in a free vote the immense majority of the European workers would decide against the introduction of bolshevism into their own land, nevertheless a large majority would be opposed to any attempt in the way of foreign intervention to put an end to the bolshevik experiment in Russia. As regards the German workers, my own observations lead me to formulate the attitude of most of them towards Soviet Russia in the following words. The working class is watching affairs in Soviet Russia with extreme interest, for it regards the bolshevik experiment as the first large-scale endeavour to realise socialism. The working masses of western lands, for the reason that the modern proletariat has imbibed Marxian doctrines from childhood onwards, will only be convinced of the impracticability of the system if it collapses of itself without external interference; and they are quite as sceptical about the bourgeois press reports concerning Soviet Russia

as they are about the soundness of the propagandist utterances of the German communist newspapers. In a word, the German working class has, for the most part, adopted an attitude of expectancy towards bolshevism and is waiting upon events. Since, however, it has no data upon which to form an accurate idea of Russian conditions, it is inclined to regard the mere persistence of the bolshevik regime from 1917 to 1932 as sufficient proof that socialism is a workable proposition.

Nay more, a good many Europeans who in their views and ways of life belong to the bourgeois world, have come to substantially the same conclusion. I was *only too well* aware when writing to the German newspapers I represented about the great political trials in Moscow, and especially about the Shachty affair, that many of my readers would feel that I must be a prejudiced reporter—were it only for the reason that the brain of a European can scarcely conceive the possibility of such baseness and fraud as characterise what is called "Soviet justice". Who, in the West, will believe that the very accused can be so wrought upon behind the scenes that in open court, hour after hour, they will build up a scaffolding of lies enabling the court to condemn them to death? One must have seen such things with one's own eyes, must have heard them with one's own ears, must have had irrefutable proof of them in Russia itself, before one can believe them possible. Far be it from me to reproach any non-Russian if he remains incredulous. In the spiritual struggle between bolshevism on the one hand and the free political and economic systems of the West on the other, the latter are terribly handicapped by the unscrupulousness of bolshevik propaganda, which can avail itself of the titanic apparatus of one of the greatest and most populous States in the world. What can the two or three dozen Europeans who really know the Soviet State do against the alliance of that State with the foreign communist sections and with amateur spartacism? Were it not that the bolsheviks' own Asiatic crudeness leads them, from time to time, to parade their brutality before the foreign world; did not

bolshevik Russia pillory itself ever and again by mass executions, by the expulsion of peasants of foreign origin, by fomenting revolt in other lands, and by similar scandals—I should feel there was no hope of preventing Europe from making a practical trial of the bolshevik system. Nothing but the manifest horror of the shooting of the twenty in the summer of 1927 and of the forty-eight in the autumn of 1930 would have induced the representatives of European civilisation to protest as they did. Philanthropic organisations which have always been ready to utter loud protests on the occasion of comparatively slight infringements (real or supposed) of the rights of man in other lands, have for years exhibited a cautious silence whenever bolshevik outrages on the grand scale were in question. The guardians of the Zion of international morality—to judge by what they do and what they leave undone—appear to be completely unaware of the fact that all the breaches of humanity in Europe, all the spiritual and bodily maltreatment at the hands of constituted authority that goes on in Europe, are both quantitatively and qualitatively a trifle when compared with the outrages against human dignity and the rights of man that take place day by day in Soviet Russia. Finally it has to be remembered that the Russian people is not known to the western world; that we non-Russians are quite unable to realise how incapable is this nation, enslaved as it has been for so many centuries, of showing the spirit and the will which would enable it to rid itself of such a system. Again and again people have said to me: “If things in Soviet Russia were really so bad as some contend, a counter-revolution would have broken out long ere this!” My answer on such occasions is: “If in Germany such things had been going on as have been going on for the last fourteen years in Russia, we should have had, not one, but fourteen revolutions! For the rest the Russians have been suffering, not for fourteen years, but for three centuries.”

## 4. AMATEUR SPARTACISM

Irresponsibly and heedlessly, a considerable proportion of the European intelligentsia lends its aid to the diffusion of bolshevik error, and, by pro-bolshevik manifestations, is partly to blame for the outrages committed on the Russian people. This is explicable enough. In certain circles it is good form to be "advanced", to belong to the Left. These misguided intellectuals support the bolsheviks because bolshevism is a movement to the Left. Now, apart from the fact that the political ideas of Right and Left are long outworn, and have nowadays no more than a demagogic significance, the Soviet regime has such obviously reactionary lineaments that no one but these amateur spartacists could be so naive as to discern anything appertaining to the Left in the Soviet Russia of to-day. The compulsory recruiting of labour, an intolerable lack of freedom in the exercise of the suffrage, a gerrymandering of the electorate, the most highly subtilised police terrorism, executions without form of law, housing conditions as compared with which those that obtain in the working-class quarters of our great towns seem palatial, a militarism which has its tentacles in all the schools and enrolls even the women in its ranks, a grievous lack of the prime necessities of life—what is there to be called Left in this, what elements remain here of the workers' State and of the proletarian dictatorship, where can we discern the vestiges of freedom? When such men as the famous civil engineer Count Arco collaborates in the publication of a Berlin propaganda periodical "*Das neue Russland*", when we note that men of the calibre of Heinrich Mann, Lion Feuchtwanger, Hermann Hesse, Baron von Schönaich, and Karl Zuckmeyer, rally to the defence of the frescoes in the Wörpsweder Children's Home, which are doubtless artistic but are preposterously "class war" in their spirit, when we find the names of Alfred Kerr and Franz Blei among the signatories of bolshevik revolutionary appeals defending the miscarriage of justice in the Ramsin trial—we can only

hope that these members of the German intelligentsia will not have to pay as dearly for their crude revolutionism as the Russian intelligentsia have had to pay.

### 5. THE ACID TEST

Yet bolshevism will not pass away out of Europe without leaving a trace, and ought not so to pass. For almost a century the socialist ideal, and for more than half a century Marxian doctrine, have played a great part in the ferment of western civilisation and have been a stimulus to the aspiring masses of the fourth estate. To-day we are witnessing socialism put to the test of practice, and this is a matter of great moment. No one who regards the individual as something more than a limb of the mass, the State as something more than a public-welfare authority, and the nation as something more than a family of persons happening to use the same speech, can doubt what the issue of the test will be, and that communism will be smashed by the resistance of the individual men and women who are asked to subordinate themselves wholly to a system. But, more than this, bolshevism must and will show, even to the most materialistically minded among us, that a "purposive economy" does not increase bodily welfare or provide a greater abundance of the necessities of life.

Yet the formula is less simple than the above statement might seem to imply. A social order and an economic system have a relative value as well as an absolute one. Europe will perhaps be unable to escape putting its neck beneath the yoke of bolshevism unless a better and finer social order and economic system can be contraposed. The foundations of our own order, and above all its economic foundations, have become extremely questionable. Not even the shrewdest of our economists, not even the most plausible of their explanations, can divert our attention from the fact that it is absurd to declare the expansion of the means of production to be the cause of the present world crisis. Who but a sophist can deny that if

things were as they should be, every one would be much better off; that every one would live more comfortably, if the production of goods were greatly increased? A social order in which, on the one hand, vast quantities of consumable goods are stored as unsaleable (or, as sometimes happens, actually destroyed), while, on the other hand, millions suffer want and hunger, is not an "order" at all. Paradoxical as it may sound, the bolsheviks are furnished with a splendid opportunity for international propaganda by the fact that in Russia genuine want prevails, that in Russia all (except for a few thousand Party leaders) are hungry proletarians—whereas in the outer world the necessities of life are produced in great abundance, and yet many go hungry while others live in luxury. It is not inequality of income per se which arouses a revolutionary spirit and initiates revolutionary movements among the European workers. The intelligent worker disapproves, indeed, of blatant luxury, but understands very well that there is a reasonable relationship between achievement and reward. His attitude during the world war showed that he was ready enough to bear great privations when all had to bear them along with him. But the ordinary, simple-minded individual finds it incomprehensible (and rightly so) when the shops and the storehouses are bursting with goods at the very time when thousands upon thousands of willing, eager, and capable workers cannot get work and thus earn wages to buy these same goods. So long as the majority of the populace, and especially the efficient and the industrious, can get work and can earn reasonable wages, even marked differences in standards of life within the same population do not arouse class hostility. But if actual poverty becomes the lot of broad strata of the population, if—as during these years of crisis—it becomes intensified to mass indigence, so that whole sections of the population, like the clerks and similar employees who are getting on in years, have no longer the remotest prospect of earning a livelihood, the result is that any kind of luxury has a directly revolutionary effect. Only the shifting of property



and income that resulted from the war and the revolution can explain the way in which to-day some of the German entrepreneurs behave in a manner which shows a complete lack of social sympathy and a knowledge of mankind. What should be a paternal relationship between employers and employed has, in alarmingly numerous instances (even in small enterprises), been replaced by a ruthless egoism which a pitiful parade of interest in social wellbeing cannot compensate for. The employer, being the intellectual leader of enterprise, ought to be ashamed of the cheap phrase-making which leads him in many instances to say that the good relations of old days cannot possibly be maintained in these times when the employers are made a universal target. Thanks be there are still plenty of employers of the old school, who are able to show that by kindness, sympathetic understanding, and, above all, by themselves living in a way befitting the seriousness of the times, many hardships can be made tolerable to the workers—the hardships that are an inseparable part of the poverty of the post-war world.

An unfortunate result of the concentration of capital has been that in many instances the representatives of the employing class who come into direct touch with the employed are no longer the thoughtful and humane elements, but, rather, the "vigorously" unsympathetic. In the very circles of those who are so fond of talking of the campaign against materialism, we find many who, by their tactless and inconsiderate behaviour, tend to force the masses into a purely materialistic and de-personalised attitude towards their work. Even though there may be faults on both sides, it is the employers more than the workers who are to blame, inasmuch as the employers derive their moral title to their position, not from abstract rights of property, but only from higher qualifications, from greater culture, and from humane qualities. An employing class which is not distinguished in this way is as little fitted for its position as would be a king who should want to enjoy all the minor freedoms permissible to an average citizen.

It is the cooperation of such phenomena of the degeneration of capitalism which creates a mood in which the masses cease to ask themselves whether a proposed change of system would really improve their lot. Their feeling becomes: "Let us try a change, since we have nothing to lose." Who can wonder at the growth of the revolutionary movement when such a mood affects millions of minds and lasts for long years?

## 6. "COLD SOCIALISATION"

Thus the menace of bolshevism becomes for us a vigorous exhortation to do our utmost in the way of promoting social equality and effecting economic reform. The comparative inefficiency of the capitalist system in its attempt to deal with the problems of the post-war period has produced what can best be described as a stampede towards State capitalism. This was preceded, in striking exemplification of the doctrines of Karl Marx, by a concentration of capital and of the other means of production into giant undertakings of a quasi-monopolistic kind. Cartels and trusts have been developing in a way that tends more and more to extinguish free competition, while the relationship between capitalist and worker has been losing its primitive and personal character. The labour contract is no longer entered into by free employers and free workers, but by paid representatives of the employers' organisations and the trade unions. The compromise between the interests of the forces massed on either side is not decided so much, nowadays, by economic considerations, as by the social and political insight of official mediators.

Of late years strikes and locks-out have become rare, not so much because the contending parties have a better understanding of social and national needs, as because they are afraid of coming to grips with one another. When we remember that in capitalist countries, and especially Germany, there has been a great decline in the number of really independent workers, and when we recall that the overwhelming majority

of the urban working population to-day is paid at trade-union rates of wages, we can derive some notion of the extent to which State mediation between employers and employed has insinuated itself into the structure of our economic life. From the political standpoint the employers to-day make themselves rather absurd when they demand that the State should stand aside and should discontinue its work as mediator—absurd now that the numerical ratio between the economically independent and the economically dependent has shifted so greatly in favour of the latter. People complain bitterly that “wages are regulated by political considerations”, forgetting that the concentration of capital and of labour has created political mass-problems where in former times only individual problems existed. The process I am here considering has been termed “cold socialisation”. The phrase contains a large measure of truth.

#### 7. “ICH DIEN”

The civilised world to-day is going through a very remarkable process. On one-fifth of the surface of the globe, political fanatics, disregarding a most essential part of Marxian doctrine, are attempting to establish socialism in a primitive, comparatively uncultured, pre-capitalist population. In this attempt, they find themselves compelled to an increasing degree to apply methods that are uneconomic, inimical to civilisation, reactionary, medieval in flavour. Those who, fourteen or fifteen years ago, voiced the slogan: “Bread and Freedom”, have succeeded in effecting the 100 per cent proletarianisation of a huge nation, and in making the lack of everything (bread and freedom as well as other things) a sort of State symbol. In the remaining civilised countries of the world, on the other hand, the prophecies of Karl Marx have, to some extent, been fulfilled. There has been a concentration of capital, thanks to which the individual entrepreneurs of an earlier day have disappeared, and have been replaced by depersonalised gigantic undertakings, so that, to quote Marx's own words, only a

very few heads remain to strike off in order to establish socialism. In both these realms (and this is in crass conflict with the doctrine of the founder), the State has become wellnigh omnipotent.

How shallow are those who want to sum up the characteristics of this great struggle under the predicates of good and evil! How simple-minded are they who imagine that the happenings in latter-day Russia can be accounted for as the outcome of the doings of a handful of evil-minded persons! How wrong-headed are the fanatics who declare that the resistance of the western world to bolshevik slavery is exclusively due to the self-interest of wealthy exploiters and the stupidity of mandarins!

Persons who are content to regard our contemporary European and American social order as ideal, persons who are not filled with the ardent desire to help the poor and the weak with whom their lives bring them into contact, persons who do not find their chief happiness and welfare in the unceasing struggle against the sufferings and privations of their fellows—have no right to be censorious about Soviet Russia. Those who still fail to see that the old-style capitalism no longer exists, and those who lack courage and energy to join hands in the search for a new and better form, will be flicked from the swiftly turning wheel of development as the ruling caste in pre-war Russia has been. But those, too, who regard a socialist community (the most primitive and most despiritualised form of the equalitarian State) as the ideal, commit a crime when they strive to bring it into being without making clear to themselves what vast sacrifices of human value and human dignity are involved in its attainment and maintenance.

Fight against bolshevism? Yes! Fight against bolshevism, which with the self-confident blindness of a sleep-walker is marching toward the helot State, the slave State; which in its pursuit of a false ideal is constrained to annihilate freedom. But do not fight by clinging stubbornly to obsolete standards.

Fight with a full sense of revolutionary responsibility to bring into being that new commonwealth in which socialism shall live, not as a form, but as a spirit. The only will that can save Europe from the Red jack-o-lantern, from the Red spectre in the East, is embodied in the plain and venerable watchword "Ich dien".

## APPENDIXES

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## APPENDIX I

(to page 94)

Working Plan  
of the Political Bureau and the Plenum of  
the Central Committee  
of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union (the Bolsheviks)  
for the Year 1928  
confirmed by the United Plena  
of the Central Committee and of the Central Control Commission  
on April 11, 1928

- |            |   |
|------------|---|
| April 1st. | Result of the grain-providing campaign of 1927-1928 and measures for safeguarding the new campaign. Report of the Commissariat for Home Trade.  |
| April 2nd. | Programme of the Communist International.   |
| May 3rd.   | Concerning measures for the improvement of the higher and middle technical educational institutions, with due regard to the training and the proper distribution of Red specialists and economists. Report of the executive of the Central Committee. |
| May 4th.   | Concerning measures for improving wireless and cinemas. Report of the executive of the Central Committee.   |
| May 5th.   | Concerning general compulsory elementary education. Report of the executive of the Central Committee.   |
| June 6th.  | Report of the Commissariat for Transport concerning the condition of the railway transport system.  |
| June 7th.  | The condition of building affairs, and the measures to be taken to make buildings cheaper.  |
| June 8th.  | Report of a governmental commission concerning the primary results and the further extension of the seven-hour working day.   |
| July 9th.  | Concerning the reorganisation of the Commissariat for Home Trade in the Soviet Union. Report of the Commissariat for Home Trade.  |



- July 10th. Examination of the practice of rationalisation in industry. Report of the Supreme Economic Council.
- August 11th. Concerning the state of the armed forces of the country. Report of a commission.
- August 12th. Reports of the Commissariat for Agriculture of the R.S.F.S.R. and of the U.S.S.R. [the initials here mean the Ukrainian Socialist Soviet Republic] and of the central governing body of the collectivised estates concerning the condition of collective and State agriculture.
- September 13th. Audit figures of the national economy for the year 1928-1929. Report of the State-Planning Bureau.
- September 14th. Plans for the financing of industry in the year 1928-1929. Report of the Supreme Economic Council of the Soviet Union.
- September 15th. Results of the working of the export, import, and exchange plans for 1927-1928, and formulation of the plans for export, import, and exchange for the year 1928-1929. Report of the Commissariat for Finance.
- September 16th. The working of the budget during the year 1927-1928, and the budgetary plans for the year 1928-1929. Report of the Commissariat for Finance.
- October 17th. Experiences with the united banks and reorganisation of the State Bank. Report of the State Bank and report of the Workers' and Peasants' Inspection.
- October 18th. Report of the Central Committee of the U.C.P. [the Ukrainian Communist Party] concerning the result of the political and economic activities of Ukraine.
- November 19th. Concerning the result of the campaign against bureaucracy in the State and economic apparatus, and concerning further measures to be taken to this end. Report of the W.P.I. and of the C.C.C.
- November 20th. Five-Year Plan for the development of the national economy. Report of the State-Planning Bureau, and report of the relevant departments.

## APPENDIX II

(to page 111)

Resolution passed by the Fifteenth Party Congress  
held in December 1927

1. IN the domain of ideology, the opposition has passed on from contradictions of a technical character to contradictions of a programmatic character—contradictions which, revising Lenin's views, lapse to the standpoint of menshevism. Denying the possibility of a victorious development of socialism in the Soviet Union, and, consequently, denying the socialist character of our revolution; denying the socialist character of our State industry; denying the socialist course of development in the rural districts under the conditions of the proletarian dictatorship and the policy of the alliance between the proletariat and the great majority of the peasants upon the basis of socialist construction; and, finally, in fact repudiating the proletarian dictatorship in the Soviet Union ("Thermidor") and being therefore defeatist—this whole complex of ideas transforms the Trotskyist opposition into a weapon of petty-bourgeois democracy within the Soviet Union and into the allies of the international social democracy for whose aims they are working.<sup>1</sup>

2. In the domain of tactics, the opposition, strengthening and intensifying its work against the Party, has not only infringed the Party's rules and regulations, but has also transcended the boundaries of Soviet law (illegal meetings, illegal printing-presses, illegal press organs, the forcible occupation of rooms, etc.). The completion of this anti-Soviet tactic signifies the transition to an open struggle against the regime of the proletarian dictatorship and to the organisation of street demonstrations against the Party and the Soviet government on November 7, 1927. The anti-Soviet tactics of the opposition (which are carried on also in foreign parts), in conjunction with the diffusion of calumnies against the Soviet Union, have, in actual fact, lined up the opposition beside the declared enemies of the land of the proletarian dictatorship.

3. In the domain of organisational questions, the opposition,

<sup>1</sup> Let me repeat that bolshevik documents are not written in classical Russian, but in a quasi-international jargon whose style and characteristics can only be conveyed in a western tongue by a literal translation.

taking its stand upon the revision of Leninist views, has passed on to found its own Trotskyist party. The Commission has ascertained beyond dispute that the opposition has its own central committee, district, provincial, urban, and other centres, that it has technical apparatuses, that it levies subscriptions from its members, that it has its own press organs, etc. In foreign parts, the Trotskyist party was not only allied with the fractional anti-Leninist groups that exist within the parties comprising the Comintern, but also with organisations, groups, and individuals that have never belonged to the Communist International, and in addition with the enemies of and traitors to the communist movement who have been expelled from the Comintern (Maslow, Ruth Fischer, Koisch, Souvarine, Rosmer, Rolland-Holst, Liebers, etc.). As a result of such organisational practice, the opposition came to ally itself within the Soviet Union with non-Party bourgeois intellectuals (Shcherbakoff and Co.), who, in turn, were allied with declared counter-revolutionaries; and, across the Soviet frontier, the Trotskyist opposition became a most effective tool for the support of the bourgeoisie in all countries.

Setting out from the considerations exposed above, the Fifteenth Congress approves the action taken by the Central Committee and the Central Control Commission on November 14, 1927, expelling Trotsky and Zinovieff from the Party, excluding the other opposition members of the c.c. and the c.c.c. from these organisations, and referring the whole question of the opposition to the Fifteenth Congress for discussion. In a previous resolution the Congress has declared that membership of the Trotskyist opposition and the propaganda of the opposition views are incompatible with membership of the Party.

The Congress therefore holds that the opposition must disarm both ideologically and organisationally, that its views are to be decisively condemned as anti-Leninist and menshevik, and that it is the duty of the Congress to defend the views and resolutions of the Party, its congresses, and its Central Committee.

The opposition, however, has rejected this demand of the Party. In the document of December 3, 1927, signed by 121 active workers in the opposition, the opposition does not merely refuse to comply, but persists in the propaganda of its menshevik views. . . .

While noting the plain contradiction between the two groups of the opposition, the Congress regards both the opposition declarations as completely inadequate. Basing itself on what has been said above, and condemning the opposition for having twice

failed to abide by its formal pledges to abstain from fractionism, the Congress hereby resolves:

1. To exclude from the Party the following active leaders of the Trotskyist opposition [75 names follow]; 2. To expel from the Party the Saponoff group as manifestly anti-revolutionary [23 names follow]; 3. To instruct the c.c. and the c.c.c. to take all such measures as may exert an ideological influence upon the ordinary members of the Trotskyist opposition, with a view to convincing them [of the error of their ways], and at the same time to purge the Party of all those elements of the Trotskyist opposition whose conversion is plainly impossible.

## APPENDIX III

(to page 112)

*The document of the 121 of December 3, 1927*

COMRADES! The unity of the Communist Party must be the supreme principle during the era of the dictatorship of the proletariat. Without unity, the Party cannot keep the dictatorship upon the foundations of Leninism, cannot advance towards the establishment of socialism, and cannot further the development of the world revolution. Nevertheless, of late, the development of the struggle within the Party has been a menace to the unity of the Party. If the further development of our struggle should lead to a split, and then to a fight between two parties, the cause to which Lenin devoted his life would be formidably threatened. We have no desire to deny our share of responsibility for the intensification of the struggle within the Party. In fighting on behalf of our views we have entered the path of fractionism, which has often taken very acute forms; and in a number of instances we have had recourse to means which involved a breach of Party discipline. Nothing but a profound conviction of the soundness and of the Leninist character of our views would have led us to take this course; nothing but the determination to bring these views to the knowledge of the masses of the Party members; nothing but the hindrances which we have encountered in this endeavour; nothing but the accusations that have been made against us, accusations intolerable to bolsheviks. There are no programmatic contradictions between ourselves and the Party. When we spoke of the existence and the growth of Thermidorian dangers in the country,<sup>1</sup> and when we insisted that not enough was being done to ward off these perils, we never said and do not now say that our party and its C.C.<sup>2</sup> had become Thermidorian, or that our State had ceased to be a workers' State. In our first published programme we made ourselves perfectly clear upon these points. We continue to insist and shall continue to defend the view that our Party was and will remain the vanguard of the proletariat, and that the Soviet realm is the organisation of

\* The opposition accused the Party leaders of planning a possible overthrow of the left-wing bolsheviks, analogous to the events of the Ninth Thermidor during the French Revolution.

<sup>1</sup> Read, "Stalin"!

the dictatorship of the proletariat. We have no doubt whatever that the Soviet Union, the first proletarian realm in the world, the fatherland of all the workers, is fully competent to defend itself. We never have been and never shall be prepared to make persons who are not members of the Party judges as concerns our dissensions within the Party; but at the same time we are firmly convinced that as regards its basic political principles the Party has nothing to hide from the non-Party masses of the workers (who constitute the class basis of our Party); and that to keep those who are not Party members well informed regarding what goes on within the Party would enable them to take a more objective view of the Party and its opinions, as used to happen in Lenin's day. But the struggle within the Party has been intensified to such a degree that it threatens the unity of the Party, and consequently has become a menace to the fundamental interests of the dictatorship of the proletariat. This must not be allowed to continue. The struggle in these forms must be liquidated. Before the face of the international bourgeoisie, which looks forward to a split of our Party and is therefore preparing all the more persistently for a war on the Soviet Union; before the face of the international proletariat, which rightly regards the unity of the Party as the best guarantee for the success of its revolutionary struggles—we deem it our duty to do all that is necessary to strengthen the fighting unity of our Party. We cannot repudiate our views, for we are convinced of their soundness, and have made them widely known to the Party in our platform [the aforesaid programme] and our theses; but to safeguard the unity of the Party, to maintain it as an effective fighting force for the guidance of the State and for the promotion of the proletarian world movement, we hereby declare to the Congress that we shall discontinue any kind of fractional work, that we shall dissolve every sort of fractional organisation, and we demand that those of our way of thinking in the Party and the Comintern shall follow our example. We consider obedience to the decisions of the Congress to be the unconditional duty of every member of the Party, and we shall realise this obedience in our practice. For years and for decades we have worked for our Party. We do not want a split; we do not desire the establishment of a second party. We categorically reject all notion of founding a second party. We look upon any attempt of the kind as in flat contradiction with the doctrine of Lenin and as foredoomed to destruction. We shall continue to work for our Party by defending our views within the limits imposed by the rules and regulations

and by the resolutions of the Party, such being the right of every bolshevik, as expounded in a series of congresses during Lenin's lifetime and subsequently. This declaration is the expression of our fixed resolve. We believe that we are also expressing the opinions of all those of our way of thinking who have been expelled from the Party, and we are of the opinion that, upon the basis of this declaration, the Party should as the first step towards the re-establishment of a normal Party life, reaccept these expelled comrades into the Party, that it should liberate from prison those who have been arrested for oppositional activities, and that it should give each of us the possibility of showing the firmness of our resolve by our work in the Party. We do not doubt that in the Comintern analogous measures towards those of our way of thinking, in conjunction with their renunciation of fractional activities, would contribute to restore normal conditions in the other sections of the Comintern. Before the opening of the Congress and during the discussions at the Congress we have fought on behalf of our views with the utmost firmness and resolution. Now that we have decided to submit to the decisions of the Congress, we shall, as genuine soldiers of the bolshevik proletarian army, transform this resolve into fact with equal firmness and resolution.

## APPENDIX IV

(to page 112)

*Declaration of the Kameneff-Zinovieff Group  
under date December 10, 1927*

THE Fifteenth Congress not only rejected our views, but forbade their diffusion. Inasmuch as we defended our views before the Congress, being convinced of their soundness, we simultaneously in our declarations assured the Congress that we should regard acceptance of its decisions as necessary, however difficult this might be. . . . We consequently declare: 1. That the oppositional fraction must and will dissolve; and, 2. That the decision of the Congress to forbid the propaganda of our views is accepted by us all as binding. We demand from all those of our way of thinking that, on their part likewise, they shall comply with the decisions of the Congress. Each of us must adopt the position indicated to him by the Party, and must carry out its decisions with all his energy, thus assisting the Party to march forward towards the goal indicated by Lenin. The comrades expelled from the Party for oppositional activities have already petitioned the Congress for readmission. We repeat and support this request, with the obvious proviso that the liberation from prison of those now under arrest shall imply complete abstinence from oppositional activities.



## APPENDIX V

(to page 113)

*Extract from the Declaration of the Trotsky-Radek Group  
under date December 18, 1927*

WE have been expelled because of our opinions. These opinions have been expounded in our platform and in our theses. We regard these views as bolshevik and Leninist. We cannot disavow them, for the course of events is showing their soundness. More than one thousand opposition communists have already been expelled from the Party. The expulsion of the leaders of the opposition by the Congress will be the signal for the expulsion of thousands more of the members of the opposition. These expulsions will signify, whether the Congress wants it or not, that the Party policy has taken a turn to the Right, with the result that classes and groups in Russia hostile to the proletariat will become consolidated, and that the pressure of imperialism from without will be intensified. The expulsion of the members of the opposition and the reprisals against them are intended to eradicate oppositional ideas. Nevertheless, and all reprisals notwithstanding, insofar as these ideas give true expression to the historical interest of the proletariat and to the fundamental aims of the Party, they will persist within the Party and will find new defenders.

## APPENDIX VI

(to page 113)

### *Declaration of the Kameneff-Zinovieff Group under date December 18, 1927<sup>1</sup>*

WE wish to inform the Congress of our change of views, as follows. The Congress' decision in the matter of the opposition must make every one who has been a member of the sometime fraction face the question of his future work for the proletarian revolution. This cause, which under Lenin's leadership we have served for years and decades, cannot be served outside the Party, cannot be served by the organisation of a second party. It can only be served within the ranks of the Party. Meanwhile the Congress has expelled us from the Party. Hard as are the demands made upon us by the Congress, and however firm the conviction with which we have defended our views before the Congress, we must now bow to its will and must accept its views as the views of the Party, inasmuch as this is the only leader of the proletarian revolution and the supreme judge of what will contribute to and what will detract from the victory of the revolutionary movement. The Congress has declared unsatisfactory our declaration under date December 10th regarding our renunciation of the propaganda of our views. We therefore comply with the Congress' demand for ideological and organisational disarmament. We pledge ourselves to defend the views and decisions of the Party, its congresses, its conferences, and its c.c. We hold to be unsound and (in conformity with the Congress' resolution) we condemn as anti-Leninist the views of those who deny the possibility of a victorious establishment of the Soviet Union, the socialist character of our revolution, the socialist character of our State industry, the socialist path of rural development under the conditions of the proletarian dictatorship and the policy of the alliance between the proletariat and the great majority of the peasants upon the basis of socialist construction—we condemn the repudiation of the proletarian dictatorship in the Soviet Union ("Thermidor"). We regard it as our main fault that in our struggle against the c.c. of the Party we adopted courses which involved a real danger of the formation of a second party. We must also recognise as an error our behaviour on November 7th, the forcible occupation of a room, the organisation of illegal printing-

presses, etc. Any one who attempts to form a party of his own is inevitably setting himself in opposition to the Comintern and to the Soviet Union and is inevitably making his way into the camp of their enemies. This applies not only to the Party, but also to the sections of the Comintern. We therefore admit it would be an error to keep in touch with the Masloff-Ruth Fischer group, and we break off all connexion with it. As regards Korsch, Souvarine, Rosmer, Rolland-Holst, and Liebers, we never have had and have not now anything in common with them. We beg the Congress to readmit us into the Party and to give us the possibility of participating in the daily practical work of the Party. [There were 23 signatures to this document, among them the names of Kameneff, Zinovieff, Bakaeff, Evdokimoff, and Lashevich.]

## APPENDIX VII

(to page 129)

### *Purge of the Crimean Organisation*

THE plenum of the district committees of the Party listened to the report concerning the result of the investigations of the soviet and village nuclei undertaken by the Crimean organisation at the instigation of the C.C. The number of persons tested was 3,120. The testing committee expelled 413 persons (13·2 per cent). The majority of the expelled were persons who had deviated from the Party line, who were allied with alien elements, and who had infringed the Party ethics and Party discipline. [The examination of the nuclei was to be followed by an examination of the soviet and cooperative apparatus, which was to take three or four months.]

## APPENDIX VIII

(to page 191)

Table of Contents  
of a Reading Book entitled *Yesterday and To-Day*  
by M. N. Kovalevsky, Moscow, 1928.  
For Use in Soviet Schools

1. The Wealth of our Country and the Poverty of our People.
2. Life of the Peasants under Serfdom.
3. Life of the Landowners when Serfdom prevailed.
4. Struggle of the Peasants against the Landlords.
5. How they "liberated" the Serfs.
6. The New Urban Russia.
7. Life of the Workers.
8. The Working-Class Movement.
9. Early Days of the Socialist Movement.
10. Beginning of the Revolutionary Movement in Russia.
11. Revolutionary Movement of the Workers.
12. The Revolution of 1905.
13. The World War.
14. The Fall of Tsarism.
15. End of the Bourgeois Regime.
16. The Federation of Socialist Soviet Republics.

# APPENDIX IX

(to page 235)

## Contemplated Book Production of the Soviet Union during the first and the last Years of the Five-Year Plan

				In Millions of Sheets or Signatures of Sixteen Pages each	
				1927-1928.	1932-1933.
General Division	..	..	..	90	180
Philosophy	..	..	..	5	10
Antireligious Literature	..	..	..	8	40 (1)
Religion	..	..	..	2	— (1)
Social Economics (= Politics)	..	..	..	400	1,170
Philology <sup>1</sup>	..	..	..	250	630
Exact Sciences	..	..	..	130	335
Technics and Industry	..	..	..	50	300
Agriculture	..	..	..	28	170
Medicine and Veterinary Medicine..	..	..	..	43	110
Applied Sciences	..	..	..	28	45
Art and Sport	..	..	..	15	25
Theory and History of Literature..	..	..	..	10	25
Belles Lettres	..	..	..	325	855
History and Geography	..	..	..	64	145
				<hr/> 1,450	<hr/> 4,140

<sup>1</sup> "Philology" does not here mean "the science of language" (the modern English sense of the term). It means "learned works"—on subjects other than those separately specified in the enumeration. When originally introduced into English this word meant "a love of learning and literature", and *Philologie* is still used in that sense by the Germans.—  
TRANSLATORS' NOTE.



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